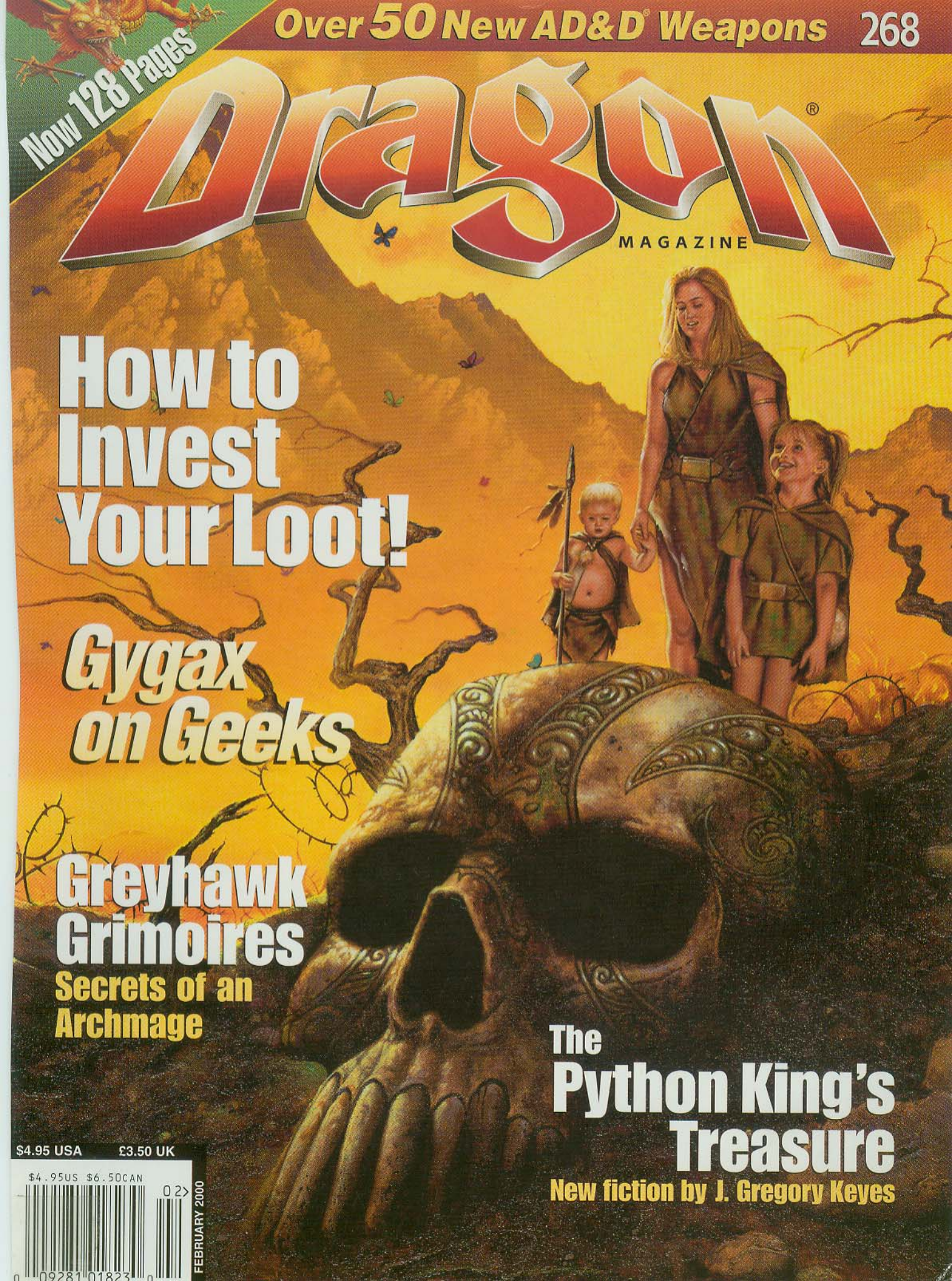
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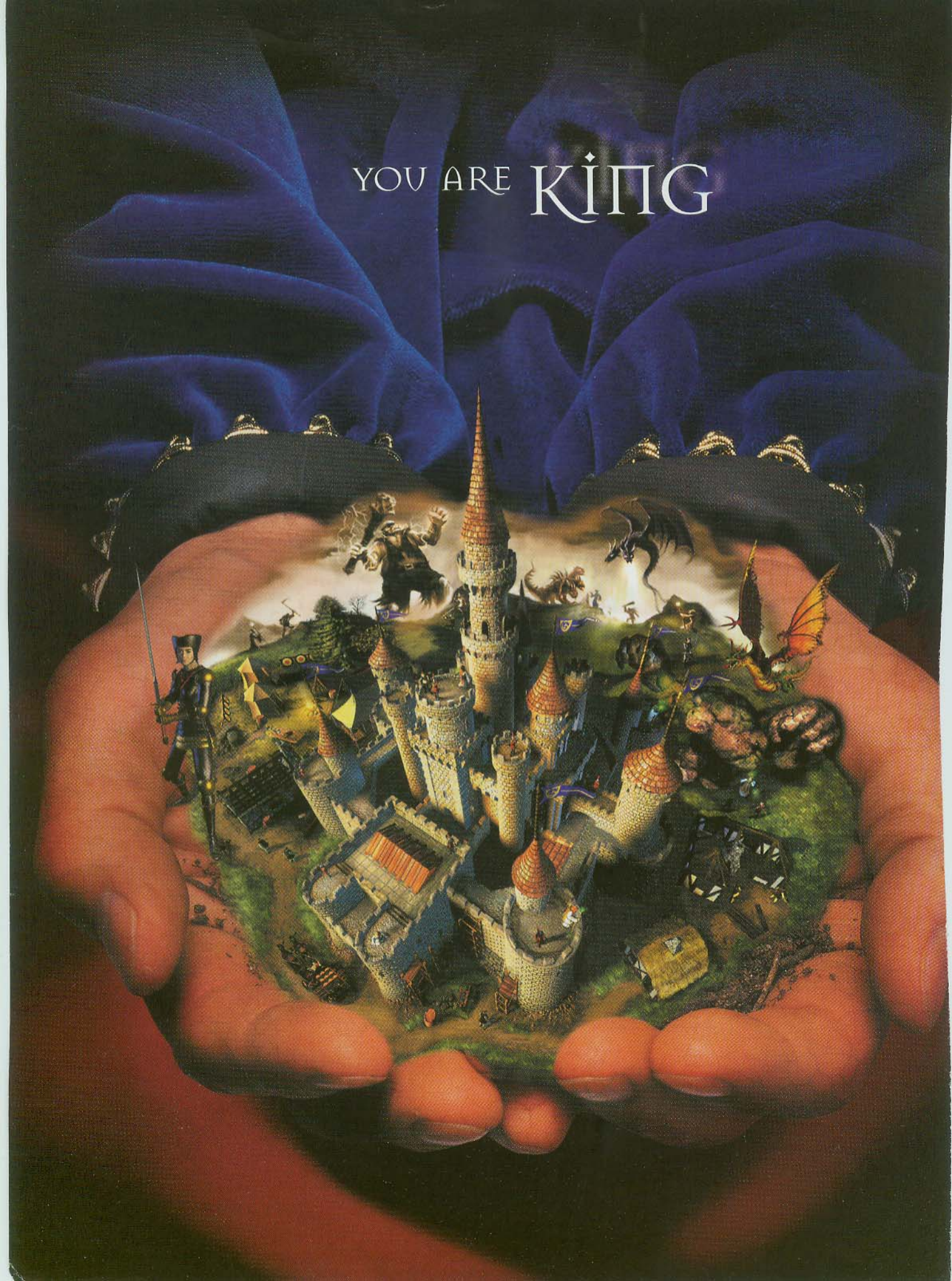
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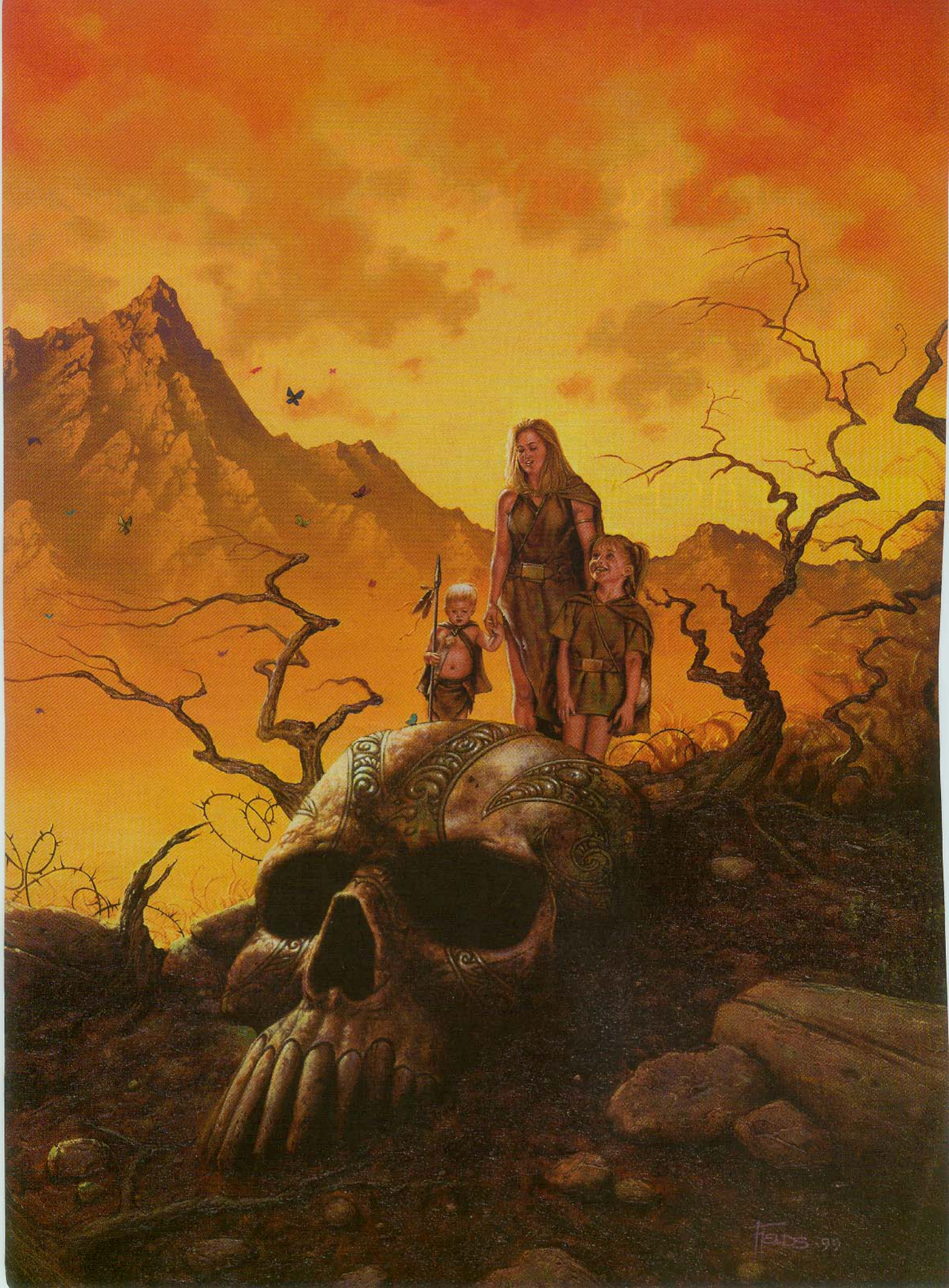

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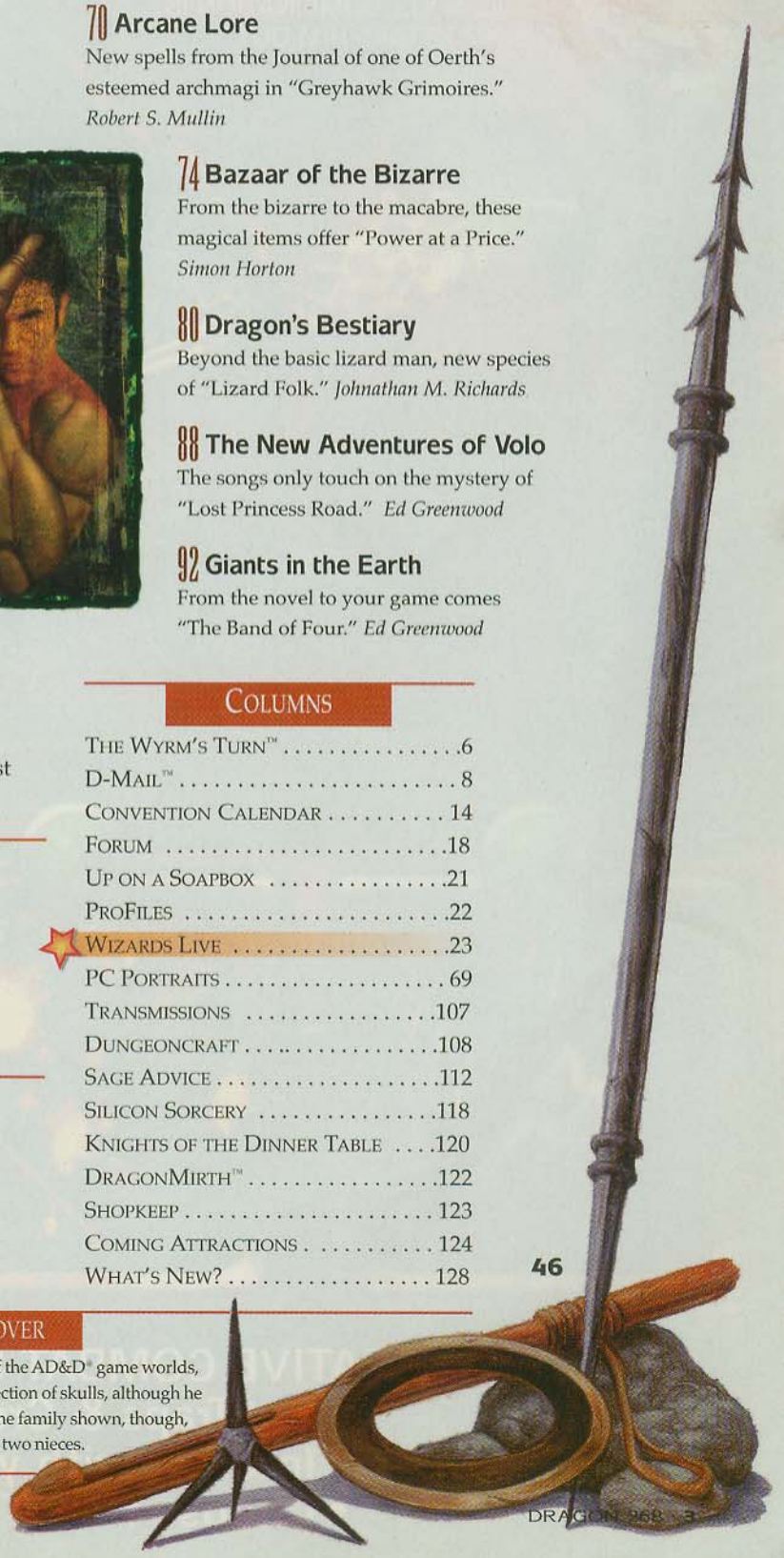

ON THE COVER

Over the years, the art of Fred Fields has given shape and color to most of the AD&D® game worlds, and has graced many of our covers. Fred is also the curator of a large collection of skulls, although he assures me that the skull featured on our cover is not in his collection. The family shown, though, *is* part of his "collection." They're his sister-in-law and his two nieces.

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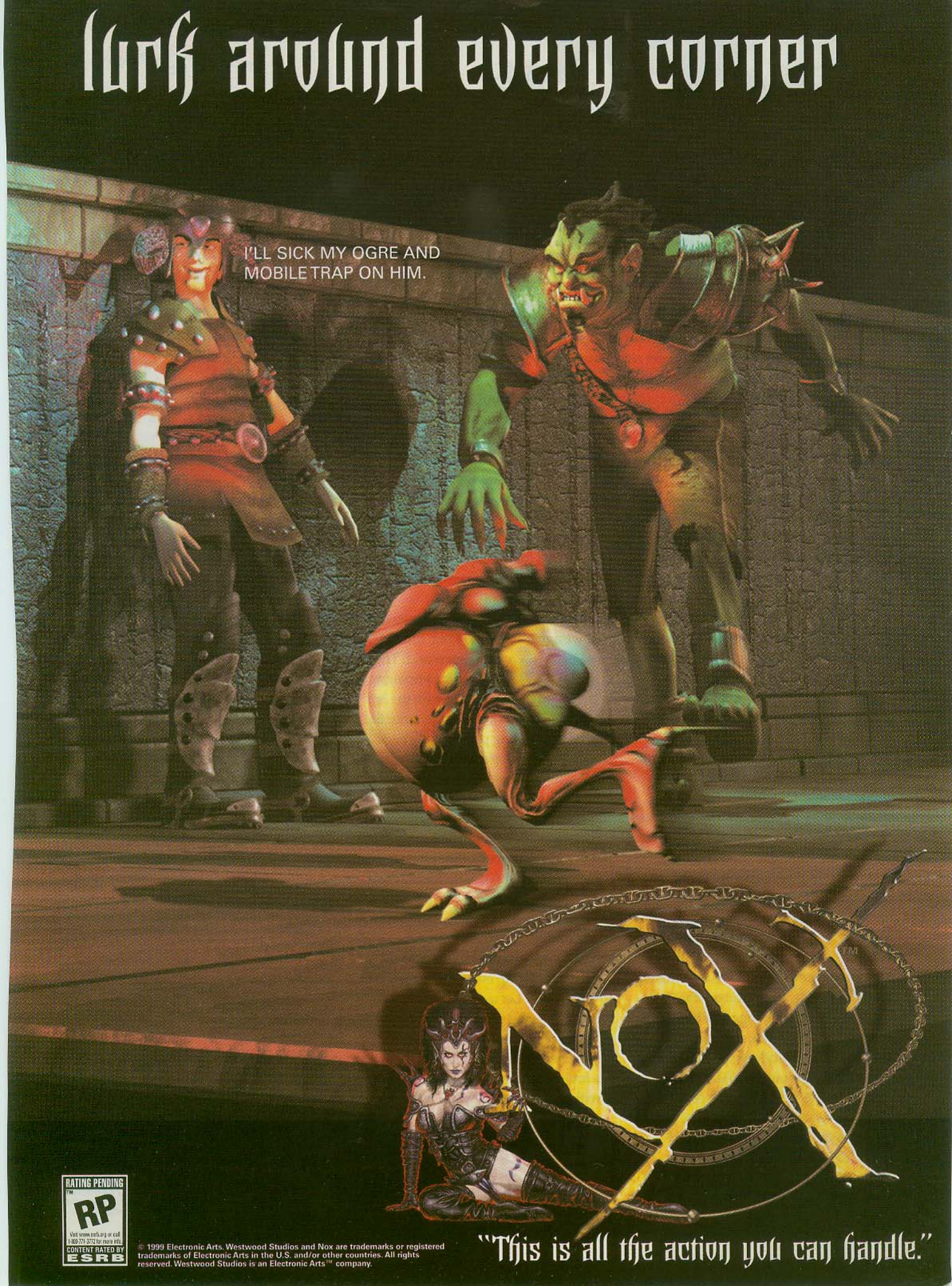

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The Wyrm's Turn™

Taking Turns

One of my favorite AD&D® campaigns in college was the one in which we took turns wearing the DM's hat. At first, the idea seemed a recipe for disaster, since each of us players was a strong-minded individual. As it turned out, our disparate personalities and styles were exactly what we needed. Sharing the DM's job not only gave everyone a chance to play but also lent more depth and diversity to the setting, in our case the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign.

Our first task was to divvy up the turf. I was the most selfish, grabbing up huge tracts of land as part of my personal territory. Since I was the DM about half the time, that seemed fair. My adventures took place in Waterdeep, Cormyr, and the oddball settings like the Hordelands, Kara-Tur, and Zakhara. Others claimed their favorite parts of Faerûn, and my friend Bob called dibs on Realmspace, since he was a devoted fan of the SPELLJAMMER® rules.

Who's the DM this week?

Because most of us had lots of classes and a job or three, we depended on modules and the pages of *DUNGEON® Adventures*, only rarely concocting our own scenarios. Even then, being the DM was demanding, so no one minded turning over the DM's screen for a character sheet.

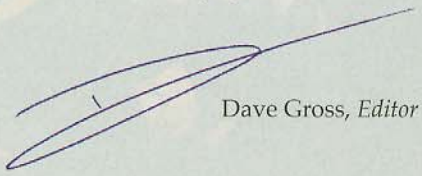
A number of ground rules kept us from breaking the campaign. Most important was the rule that you never played your own character as an NPC. Whenever I ran adventures, my invoker was conveniently elsewhere, researching a spell or taking a vacation on the Moonsea coast. When someone else took over, my character returned, and the new DM's character suddenly remembered a pressing obligation elsewhere.

The benefits of the shared-world DMing went beyond the obvious. Since the same group of characters experienced adventures all over (and far above) the world, the setting seemed all the more vivid and real. Moving from one fantasy culture to the next felt like a real journey into strange lands, yet references to foreign gods, nations, and rulers became familiar to the group as a whole. In the end, we all ended up better players and DM for the experience, since we'd seen the world from both sides of the DM's screen.

If there was a key to our success, it was that we agreed to share a big, unified campaign world. That'll be easy for campaigns beginning with the 3rd Edition game, since the GREYHAWK® setting provides the backdrop for place, character, and deity names. It's also easy for a world as big and well known as the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting.

The same idea could work when creating a campaign world, though no doubt the process would be much more challenging, requiring a delicate balance between shared knowledge, for continuity, and secrets, for the sense of discovery so crucial to rich campaign worlds.

Has your group ever shared the DM's role this way? Let us know how it worked out, and share the fruit of your experience with those who might never have considered DMing before. The task is a lot less intimidating if you're sharing it with all the other players.



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No Greyhawk?!

I was disheartened by the recent editorial comment in "D-Mail" that there will not be a lot of GREYHAWK® support in *DRAGON Magazine* in the future, although FORGOTTEN REALMS® will continue to be supported because it is so popular. There has been some good GREYHAWK material in the magazine lately. Can you tell us what the status of the GREYHAWK setting is and what (if any) products are in development? Thank you.

Greg Hill
Grand Rapids, MI

Don't panic! (When it's time to panic, you'll read it here first.) The GREYHAWK campaign isn't about to vanish completely from these pages, but it's true that we'll leave the bulk of campaign support to another source. The exact identity of that source is a secret we'll reveal in a month or two.

When we present GREYHAWK campaign information, it'll be the kind that translates easily into most campaign settings. For instance, check out this month's "Greyhawk Grimoires," the first of three short articles that draw their inspiration from the wizards of Oerth but that are just as useful in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, BIRTHRIGHT®, MYSTARA®, RAVENLOFT®, and SPELLJAMMER® campaigns, just to name a few.

Ravenloft Resurrection

Issue #264 contained so many useful articles that, the moment I finished reading it cover to cover, I was compelled to begin a new RAVENLOFT campaign! The *Skills & Powers* rules in "Harrowed Heroes" inspired me instantly, and they had my players practically choking on character creation ideas.

"The Cult of Simon Audaire" was page-for-page one of the most helpful and engaging articles I've encountered in *DRAGON Magazine*. Not only did the article create a major subplot for my campaign, but it convinced me to base my campaign in Richemulot and explore that domain more fully.

"Heroic Horror Campaigns" will undoubtedly be reread before I write each of my adventures. It puts the essential elements of a horror campaign into focus and challenges me to create sophisticated adventures.

Before this issue, the RAVENLOFT setting rarely left my bookcase. Now I'm a subscriber on the RAVENLOFT mailing list, a frequent visitor to the Kargatane website, and a DM full of ambition and creative energy. Subscription renewal notices appeared in my mailbox soon after issue #264, and I happily signed up for a three-year tour!

Jerry Jensen
Pacific, WA

We're always happy to lure another hapless victim into the Demiplane of Dread, especially when he renews at the same time! As with the GREYHAWK setting, we want to keep the RAVENLOFT articles useful to those who haven't (yet) wandered into the mists, but the feedback on RAVENLOFT articles has been strong enough that we have several more in the works for the first part of this year. Look for more of "Van Richten's Legacy" every few issues, and for more horror articles—when else?—each October.

No Honest Salesmen

My question concerns the spaceship designs in *DRAGON Magazine*.

Along with the ALTERNITY® game, there have been many ship designs printed, including the "Starship Perks and Flaws" article in issue #253, and a contest that went with it. Issue #259 presented the winner of this contest, the *CSS Nomad*. All of these ships looked very nice ... if they were funded by some sort of military government. Combat craft look sexy, they're exciting, and they make for good story plotlines, but they are impractical. Not one of the ships presented is a self-sufficient merchant vessel—either passenger and/or cargo. The vast majority of ships on our oceans are not military but money-earners.

Where are these designs? Yes, mere commerce seems boring, but other elements could make them exciting.

Jeremy A. Michele
Billings, MT

While there are a few freighters and similar nonmilitary vehicles described in Starships, *it's true that most vessels in SF games tend toward the "sexy" and "exciting." Of course, there's a reason for that. Even the* Millennium Falcon, *a smuggling transport rather than a fighter, is best known for its cool appearance and its flight from Imperial Destroyers—not to mention its role in the destruction of two* Death Stars.

> ***Combat craft look sexy, they're exciting, and they make for good story plotlines, but they are impractical.***

Thus, game designers (and most gamers) tend to think in terms of fighters and battleships rather than refueling rigs and oxygen transports. Still, you make some good points, Jeremy. If your letter inspires enough other readers to demand it, we'll make our next ALTERNITY *competition the design-a-garbage-scow contest.*

Shaken Up Over Earthstokers

My friends and I are confused about certain parts of the "Earthstokers" article in Issue #265. Specifically, we're puzzled by the quote, "Many spells release SFPs (seismic force points), and a few spells deplete them." The confusion is about the exact difference between "release" and "deplete." Is it a typo? Should it be "require" rather than "release?" Or does any spell that release SFPs result in one of the Consequences of Volcano Magic occurring?

Finally, how long does it take for SFPs to rebuild after they have been depleted? How long does it take for them to rebuild after being released?

David Neff
Warrensburg, MO

Good question, David. We could have picked a better word for "released." Spells that "release" SFPs add them to the surrounding environment, perhaps causing a seismic event. Spells that "deplete" them take them out of the surrounding environment, making it less likely that there will be an earthquake or other seismic event. In general, "release" is bad, "deplete" is good. Unless you're an earthquake-inducing maniac, of course.

How quickly SFPs regenerate after depletion is entirely up to the DM, who should consider how seismically active a particular area should be. The least active regions wouldn't accumulate SFPs naturally, while a highly active area might regenerate SFPs at a rate of 1d4 per day.

3rd Edition Question

I have been playing the AD&D game since the beginning of the 1st Edition and was pleased with the changes in the 2nd, so I am really looking forward to the 3rd Edition. My only regret is that everything I have becomes obsolete with each new edition. It is too bad that there is no way of trading in old material for credits toward the new edition material, but that is just the nature of the beast.

Anyway, my reason for writing is that I have been reading the proposed changes in issue #264, and I have a question regarding the Armor Class rule. Rule 1 states that changes in AC should be recalculated to go up instead of down and that all adjustments should be inverted. When you roll to hit, the total of the final roll modified by the values is the AC that you hit. What are the modification values that you should add based on class and level? In the 2nd Edition method, you calculate the THAC0 based on class and level and then add modifiers. I really like the idea of the AC going up instead of down and can see the value of the system. I am looking forward to trying this new rule out in a campaign I am preparing to start, so if you could clarify this for me, I would greatly appreciate it.

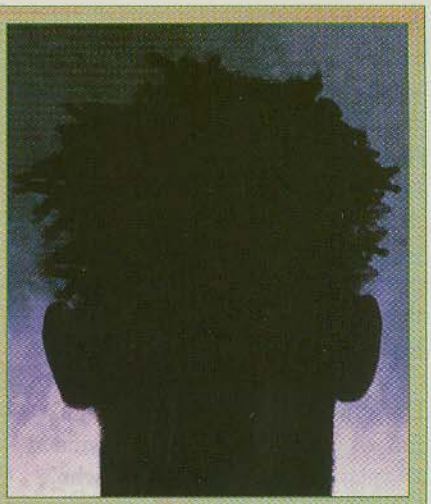
Dan Pitts
St. Louis, MO

It's a simple matter to translate the 2nd Edition charts into attack bonuses based on class. Simply give a fighter, for instance, a +1 bonus each time his or her THAC0 drops a point. It's the same formula, only reversed.

That said, don't assume that everything you read in the previews of 3rd Edition is exactly as it will appear in the new Edition. Almost all of the ten ways to play 3rd Edition today are simulations rather than duplications of the actual rules, and the text has just gone through its first editing pass as we work on this issue (in November 1999). Things can still change, though they'll still closely resemble what we're reporting to you in these pages. And don't forget that there are plenty of changes, some minor and others significant, that we haven't yet reported.

Check out the preview of wizards and magical items in this issue, then rogues and the skill system next month.

DM OF THE MONTH



DM of the Month: "Ed"

I would like to nominate our demonic DM for the DM/Player of the Month award. He has been my DM for the entire sixteen years I've been gaming, and he's been playing for over twenty-five years. To preserve his identity, let's call him Ed.

Ed always adds spice to the game with music and miniatures, as well as costumes and his acting skills, and we all enjoy him as a DM, but sometimes he goes overboard.

Not too long ago, we were playing at Ed's house. The adventure was set in some ruins deep in a tropical forest. Our miniatures were on the table, along with the trees, buildings, and so on. To make a long story short, at the climax of the adventure, we found the main monster—a giant spider. We fought the creature and survived the battle with minor wounds. Its treasure was ours, and we went inside the building. There were webs everywhere. As we started to burn them, Ed said, "As you set fire to the web, it spreads quickly toward the ceiling. In the firelight you see a large, dark shape run from the flames. Then it jumps down and lands right in front of you."

Right then, Ed dropped a big, hairy, live tarantula spider on the table.

I don't know what happened next because I screamed and ran, locking myself in the bathroom. (I'm very afraid of spiders.)

No one else got any treasure because the demonic DM told us that whatever action we took upon the spider's arrival, our characters took also. So, my elven mage/thief took off, as did almost everyone else. Only two party members remained, and against just the two of them, the spider had no trouble.

Our half-orc fighter/assassin is now resting in peace, as he fought the beast single-handedly while the remaining character took off after the rest of us.

It will take me a while to get over that one.

—Grace Steward

Send More Guns

I have been playing the ALTERNITY® game system now for a little over a year, and I must say that the STAR*DRIVE® campaign that my GM has been running has been *awesome*! I was a bit worried when the ALTERNITY game came out that Wizards of the Coast would not support the product that much, but to my delight, they have! So kudos to the ALTERNITY team. Keep it up!

This month our group played the DARK•MATTER™ campaign for the first time. Again, I think you have a winner! I've played it only once, but the whole mystery, intrigue, *The X-files* feel is—dare I say it?—*the bomb*!

My only concern was the lack of equipment and weapons initially introduced. We have four players in my group, and three of them are armed. One has a 9mm Glock 19, one has a 9mm Parabellum, and one has a .44 revolver. The .44 was easy to get stats for using the main book, but for the Glock and the Parabellum our GM used the same stats (from the standard listing for the 9mm pistol in the *Player's Handbook*). Will there ever be listings for the different types of PL 5 weaponry and equipment, or will an UZI, MAC-10, and an AKR always share the same stats? Just wondering if there are any plans for a guide of some sort or an article in *DRAGON Magazine*.

Keep the SF games coming!

R. Scott Robbins
Statesville, NC

We, too, have become DARK•MATTER fans. Most of the staff haven't played ALTERNITY for a few months, but Chris's promise to run The Killing Jar *(released this past month), and the advent of the* Starcraft *game (in stores next month) has at least two of us eager to wade through a sea of zerglings with flamethrowers!*

Not only do we have two very different articles with new weapons slated for May and June, but the A-Team has produced an entire Arms & Equipment Guide *for the DARK•MATTER setting, in stores this month.*

More ALTERNITY Articles

I have been a longtime reader of *DRAGON Magazine* and would like to take this opportunity to tell you what a valuable tool the magazine has been in the games that I have run over the years.

Now that's out of the way, let's get to some criticism. I enjoy your ALTERNITY game section. The profiles on the various ALTERNITY races have been insightful and interesting. In the most recent issue I purchased, you had a section with adventure hooks—keep those coming! I was wondering if you might throw in a page or two now and then detailing new systems and aliens. That would be cool! A lot of us ALTERNITY fans are hungry for new material to come out in your magazine. Please don't disappoint us!

Thanks for the years of excellence in writing, artwork, and in-depth game analysis. You have (for the most part) seemed to be on top of what we, as gamers, are looking for.

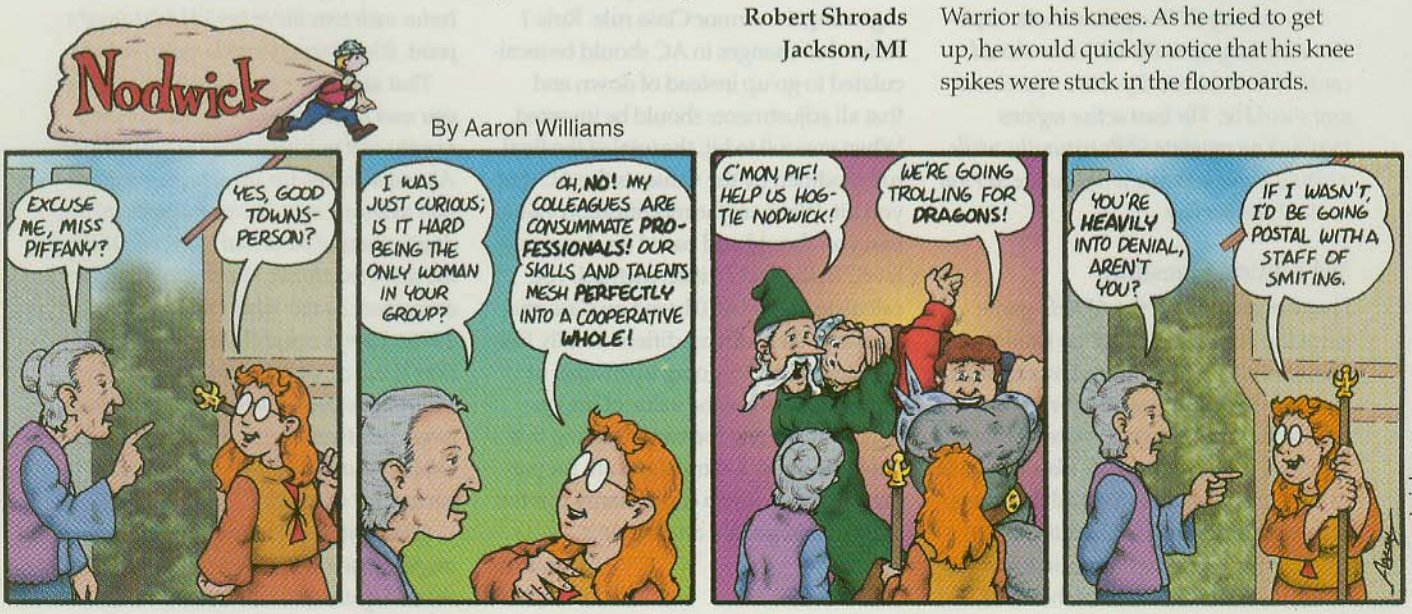
Robert Shroads
Jackson, MI

While fully realized systems and new aliens aren't on deck for the next few months, you might find the "Transmissions" page useful in fleshing out your own. Better yet, for new creatures you should check out the ALIEN COMPENDIUM® II, due for release in April. Meanwhile, we'll put both of those article types on the wish list.

Form Over Function

As a long-time player of the AD&D 2nd Edition game, I have been both nervous and excited about the 3E premier at GEN CON® 2000. The information given on your website has certainly piqued my interest in playing 3E as soon as it comes out, as even the artwork is greatly improved. However, there are some "form over function" issues that I think you should consider before deciding on the final sketches. Take, for instance, the male and female warriors on page 29 of issue #264. They look pretty tough, but in a real melee scenario, they might end up cursing their armor.

Imagine this: Your PC gets into a bar brawl with Mr. Warrior. The smartest tactic, since he looks so formidable, would be to disarm him so that he would be forced to fight with his "shield." As there is much less force delivered through an off-hand forearm than the end of a longsword in a dominant arm, any damage you received would be greatly reduced. Furthermore, what little AC bonus he received from that shield would be nullified. If you got this far, the next best thing to hope for would be a knockdown, sending Mr. Warrior to his knees. As he tried to get up, he would quickly notice that his knee spikes were stuck in the floorboards.


Nodwick
By Aaron Williams
EXCUSE ME, MISS PIFFANY?
YES, GOOD TOWNSPERSON?
I WAS JUST CURIOUS; IS IT HARD BEING THE ONLY WOMAN IN YOUR GROUP?
OH, NO! MY COLLEAGUES ARE CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONALS! OUR SKILLS AND TALENTS MESH PERFECTLY INTO A COOPERATIVE WHOLE!
C'MON, PIF! HELP US HOGTIE NODWICK!
WE'RE GOING TROLLING FOR DRAGONS!
YOU'RE HEAVILY INTO DENIAL, AREN'T YOU?
IF I WASN'T, I'D BE GOING POSTAL WITH A STAFF OF SMITING.
www.nodwick.com

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Now he's disarmed and stuck, for a short time at least, so either move in for the kill or attack with a long weapon, such as a spear, so that he can't reach you with his forearm shield-blade. Any PC would probably like to have the awesome armor and weapons of Mr. Warrior, but it'd be wise to leave the knee pads and shield for some other adventurer. A similar situation could happen with the female warrior, switching the knock-down for a shield-rush into a wall, sending her oversized spiked bracer deep into the framing.

Sure, the D&D game is fantasy, and the creativity Lockwood has put into these sketches is phenomenal, but one of the great things about the AD&D game is that it has always been tempered with some real medieval history. There is a reason ancient warriors didn't emphasize shield spikes or blades, and that's because shields work better as shields than as weapons.

Long live Lockwood, just not those shields....

Jeff Myrom
Hancock, MI

We passed Jeff's letter to Todd, since he's not only a terrific artist but also a great big game goob. Here's what he had to say:

"Thanks for your kind words, Jeff. Our first priority has been to make the game look exciting, but let me comment on your concerns about the armor.

"Firstly, you are making an erroneous assumption about the knee-spikes. If they were to point downward when the knee was bent, there would be no purpose to them. When the knees are bent, they point upward, so as to make a memorable impression on the lower quarters of an opponent's anatomy. He can kneel just fine.

"Secondly, spikes are considered a marshall weapon. In the event of a grapple, a character wearing spiked armor can cause lethal damage, whereas a character without spikes cannot. In fact, a character in spiked armor with a skill in martial weaponry is never really disarmed. Historically, spikes were used on armor to prevent grapple attacks, specifically from elephants. The shield is still a shield, unless the warrior chooses to use it as a weapon, in which case it is a weapon. A shield bash delivered with a spiked shield will do more damage.

"Thirdly, disarming an opponent is generally an inferior tactic. It is more difficult than a straight blow and could leave you open to retaliation through loss of additional attacks or through having disarmed yourself in a failed attempt. Should you succeed, would you rather then be facing a truly unarmed opponent, or one equipped to stab you with his shield or grapple you in your un-spiked armor and make it stick? I think these warriors would like for you to focus on the disarm maneuver. The same is true of a shield rush. It could be good if it works the way you hope it will. If not, you have sacrificed lethal attacks while your opponent probably has not.

"Lastly, as always, the D&D game is truly flexible. It's an option. If your fighters don't want to wear spikes, they don't have to."

Please smack publisher Johnny L. Wilson over the head ...

"What's New" is Back!

I have subscribed to *DRAGON Magazine* ever since issue #80, yet this is my first time writing to you. Your magazine has always been a treasure to receive, and I always look forward to the next issue with all its useful articles and stories. Granted, some articles didn't apply to the games I play, but they were interesting to read nevertheless.

I was saddened when Foglio left *DRAGON Magazine* years ago. It was truly a dark day in the magazine's history. Imagine my surprise when I received my November issue and spotted in the upper left hand corner, "We're Baack!" I tore the magazine's plastic shielding and immediately flipped to the back of the magazine (like I used to do when I received a new issue of *DRAGON Magazine*). "What's New!" is back! It's like getting the old fix all over again! It's great to see Phil back with the magazine—a moment that has been long overdue. Thanks for the fix, and keep up the great work!

Mike Vienonen
Round Lake Beach, IL

Like you, I'm a longtime Foglio fan, so there was no doubt in my mind that we'd snap him up as soon as "Phil & Dixie" were free of other obligations. Better yet, Phil's cartoon versions of the editorial staff are so flattering that we don't see the relationship ending anytime soon. Now, if only that Kovalic fellow would just take a hint ...

Name That Tune?

Please smack group publisher Johnny L. Wilson over the head with one of many "Best of the 1980s" hit compilations for his attributing an 80s hit to the WRONG BAND on the last page of *DRAGON Magazine Annual #4*. Timbuk3, *not* Huey Lewis, performed "The Future's So Bright (I Gotta Wear Shades)." Geez, and the majority of you guys are in the demographic that should know. You oughta be ashamed! Not as ashamed as Timbuk3 for disappearing like 5¢ waffles at a breakfast buffet, but ashamed nonetheless.

David Insley
Trappe, MD

Our fearless publisher replies: "Beware of old guys with gray beards trying to make references to pop culture. I regret my inability to cite the name of the one-hit wonder group in my Afterword and would observe that, in a perfect world, I should have fact-checked my faulty memory. Of course, as Huey Lewis (I hope!) sang on his eponymous album, 'There Ain't No Perfect World.' I'll go home and listen to my Benny Goodman and Gabrielli records, avoiding any references to music recorded after 1950."

We were reluctant to inflict the traditional punishment of a pinkbelly on the guy who signs our timesheets, but we bought Johnny the "Sounds of the 80s" collection and hid all his other CDs. We're not sure whether it'll save us from future errors, but we like the sequined glove he wears these days.

Illustrated by Phil Foglio

NAZCA

Can a past life affect the future? Kyoji, the only member of a small Kendo club has his world turned upside down. Sudden visions of past life events revive ancient Inca rivalries and ambitions, turning friends into deadly enemies! Kyoji's former mentor, Tate embraces his past life as Yawaru, and renews his old ambition to cleanse the world of its weaker elements. But, he also remembers it was Biruka, Kyoji's past life, that betrayed him last time!

December 1999 Releases

Battle Athletes Victory – The Human Race V.8	DVD	$29.98
Dragon Ball Z – The Ginyu Force V.16	DVD	$24.98
Dragon Ball Z – Super Saiyan V.17	DVD	$24.98

January 2000 Releases

Fushigi Yugi – Nuriko... V.10	VHS-Dub	$24.98
Fushigi Yugi – Nuriko... V.10	VHS-Sub	$29.98
Nazca – Blades of Fate V.1	DVD	$29.98
Nazca – Blades of Fate V.1	VHS-Dub	$24.98
Nazca – Blades of Fate V.1	VHS-Sub	$29.98
Tenchi In Tokyo – A New Ending V.8	DVD	$29.98
Pokemon – Wake Up Snorlax! V.13	DVD	$24.98
Pokemon – Wake Up Snorlax! V.13	VHS-Dub	$14.98
Pokemon – Jigglypuff Pop V.14	DVD	$24.98
Pokemon – Jigglypuff Pop V.14	VHS-Dub	$14.98
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El Hazard Alternative World – Dreams of Tomorrow V.4	VHS-Dub	$24.98
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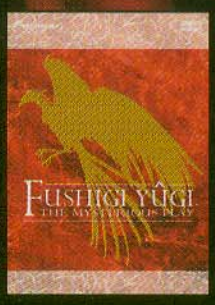

The Wait is Over!

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The epic saga of betrayal, romance, and a klutzy gluttonous Jr. High School girl continues with the second TV season of *Fushigi Yugi – The Mysterious Play*. Also available: the *Fushigi Yugi DVD Box Set I*. This four double-layered disc set contains the first 26 episodes of *Fushigi Yugi* in premium packaging - 650 minutes for only $198.98!

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Convention Calendar

February

SheVaCon

February 4–6 **VA**
Roanoke Airport Marriott, Roanoke, VA.
Contact: SheVaCon
P.O. Box 416
Verona, VA 24482-0416.
Email: sheva@adelphina.net

EcomCon2000

February 11–12 💻
Hosted by Tracy Hickman.
Web: http://www.trhickman.com/Ecomcon

Gamicon Kappa

February 18–20 **IA**
National Guard Armory, Iowa City, IA.
Contact: Jon Maakestad (email below).
Web: www.sflis.org/gamicon
Email: mmaak@soli.inav.net

DunDraCon XXIV

February 18–21 **CA**
San Ramon Marriott Hotel
San Ramon, CA.
Contact: DunDraCon, Inc.
1145 Talbot Ave., Albany, CA 94706.
Web: www.dundracon.com

Ludus 2.0

February 18–21 **VA**
Dulles Day Inn, Herndon, VA.
Contact: Barking Mad Productions
P.O. Box 482
Purcelville, VA 20134
Web: www.barkingmad.org
Email: Info@barkingmad.com

March

ConJuration 5

March 10–11 ❋
Shatner Building
3480 McTavish St.
Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
Web: http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/gamers/guild.htm
Email: mcgillgamers@hotmail.com

CosCon 2K

March 10–12 **PA**
Days Inn Conference Center, Butler, PA.
Contact: Circle of Swords
P.O. Box 2126, Butler, PA.

Princecon XXV

March 17–19 **NJ**
Whig Hall, Princeton University
Princeton, NJ.
Contact: Princecon 25
107 John E. Busch Ave.
Somerset, NJ 08873
Web: princetongames.org/princecon/

Stellar Con 24

March 17–19 **NC**
Ramada Inn and Conference Center,
High Point, NC.
Contact: StellarCon 24
Box 4, Elliott University Center, UNCG,
Greensboro, NC 27412.
Web: www.uncg.edu/student.groups/sf3/stelllarcon.htm^

April

Egyptian Campaign 2000

March 31–April 2 **IL**
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL.
Contact: Egyptian Campaign 2000
c/o SIUC Strategic Games Society
Office of Student Development
Carbondale, IL 62901-4425.
Email: ECGamCon@aol.com
Web: www.siu.edu/~gamsoc

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines must be observed.

To ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing must include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held
2. Site and location
3. Address(es) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted.

Warning: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the first Monday of each month, four months prior to the on sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the first Monday of September. Announcements for all conventions must be mailed to: "Conventions," *Dragon® Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA, 98055, U.S.A.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at (425) 254-2262 (U.S.A.).

Important: *Dragon Magazine* does not publish phone numbers for conventions. Be certain that any address you send us is complete and correct.

To ensure that your convention listing makes it into our files, enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard with your first convention notice; we will return the card to show that it was received. You also might send a second notice one week after mailing the first. Mail your listing as early as possible, and always keep us informed of any changes. Please do not send convention notices by fax, as this method has not proven reliable.

❖ Australian convention
❋ Canadian convention
✪ European convention
💻 Online convention

MIND BLAST solution: SET SNARES (the L becomes an S)

no. 8 SOLUTION

	FIRST WORD		LAST WORD		MAGIC ITEM
1	Marrow	OF	Spaying	=	ARROW OF SLAYING
2	Grope	OF	Construction	=	ROPE OF CONSTRICTION
3	Prod	OF	Massage	=	ROD OF PASSAGE
4	Thorn	OF	Boasting	=	HORN OF BLASTING
5	Sharp	OF	Discard	=	HARP OF DISCORD
6	Bring	OF	Projection	=	RING OF PROTECTION
7	Probe	OF	Ewes	=	ROBE OF EYES
8	Foil	OF	Humbling	=	OIL OF FUMBLING
9	Ewings	OF	Frying	=	WINGS OF FLYING
10	Strident	OF	Yearling	=	TRIDENT OF YEARNING

MegaCon 2000
March 31–April 2 **FL**
Expo Center, Orlando, FL.
Contact: Beth Warden
4023 Tampa Rd.,Oldsmar, FL 34677.
Web: www.megaconvention.com
Email: beth@megaconvention.com

URICON IX
March 31–April 2 **RI**
Memorial Union
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI.
Contact: URICON IX
Attn: Neal Tanner
67 Upper College Rd.
Kingston, RI 02881.
Web: http://opus.acc.uri.edu/GamingClub/
Email: gameclub@etal.uri.edu

Imagi-Con IV
April 1 **PA**
Kehr Union Building
Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, PA.
Contact: The Role Playing Guild
Box 8 Kehr Union Building
Bloomsburg University
Bloomsburg, PA 17815.
Email: bloomu_rpg@yahoo.com

OurCon 2000
28–30 **MA**
UMass Campus Center, Amherst, MA.
Contact: OurCon
RSO 178-416 SUB
UMass, MA 01003.
Web: http://ourcon/tripod.com
Email: ourcon@hotmail.com

May

Fantasy Fair X
May 21
The Cresset Exhibition Centre
Peterborough, UK.
Contact: 5 Arran Close
Holmes Chapel
Cheshire CW4 7QP
United Kingdom.

MISCON 2000
May 26–28 **MT**
Double Tree Hotel Edgewater,
Missoula, MT.
Contact: MISCON
P.O. Box 7721
Missoula, MT 59807.

June

Milwaukee Summer Revel 4
June 15–18 **WI**
Sheraton Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.
Contact: Milwaukee Summer Revel
P.O. Box 779
New Munster, WI 53152.
Web: www.rli-net/~melka/msr/index.htm

MIND FLAYERS

no. 9

by Mike Selinker

For twenty-five years, D&D® and AD&D® fans have roamed some of the most amazing places ever envisioned. Some of those locations are given as clues to the right in alphabetical order by their answers. Once you've located all the places in the word search grid, a description of these settings will be spelled out from left to right and top to bottom in the unused letters. Happy traveling!

I	M	A	N	S	A	L	O	N	S	T	S	S
F	W	Y	I	T	F	O	L	N	E	V	A	R
F	O	G	S	R	H	L	D	Y	M	V	H	O
U	I	R	O	T	A	A	B	R	B	Y	T	O
L	N	U	R	E	A	F	S	K	I	D	N	M
B	T	E	O	E	F	R	U	T	A	R	A	K
S	O	P	C	M	O	S	A	A	S	Y	L	C
N	R	S	E	R	I	A	B	H	B	N	A	A
E	I	G	R	E	Y	H	A	W	K	Y	P	L
V	L	I	I	V	L	T	I	T	T	A	S	B
A	D	A	L	E	L	A	N	D	S	H	Z	S
R	I	E	I	P	E	E	D	R	E	T	A	W
S	E	T	A	G	S	R	U	D	L	A	B	Y

1 Original home of AD&D demons
2 Main continent of #13
3 World of DARK SUN® setting
4 Hell of *A Paladin in Hell*
5 Site of an AD&D computer game
6 Home of Frog Keep
7 BIRTHRIGHT® setting
8 Where Icewind is on #10
9 Major elven isle on #23
10 Biggest continent near #9
11 The first AD&D campaign city
12 Oriental adventures setting
13 DRAGONLANCE® planet
14 The Hollow World
15 River that flows near #11
16 #11's world
17 Northern city on #2
18 Gothic demiplane of note
19 RPGA® LIVING CITY™ setting
20 Sea of Fallen Stars merchant port
21 PLANESCAPE® central hub
22 Where the Red Wizards live
23 The FORGOTTEN REALMS® world
24 City on #3 named for a god
25 Central city on #10
26 AL-QADIM® continent

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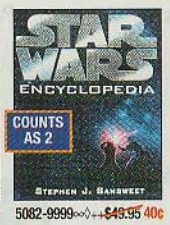

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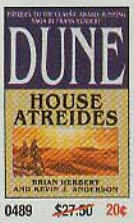

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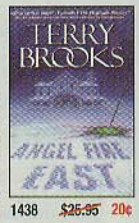

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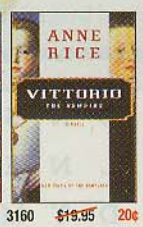

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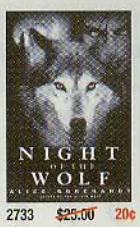

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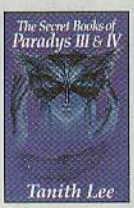

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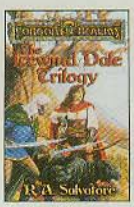

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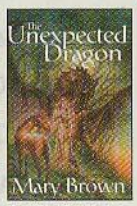

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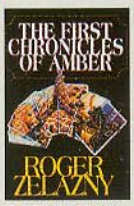

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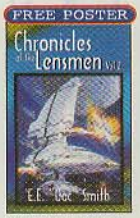

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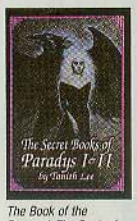

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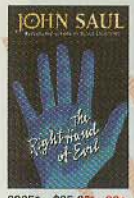

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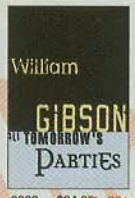

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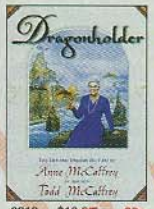

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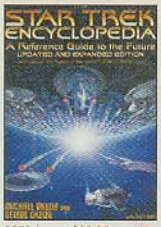

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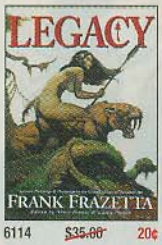

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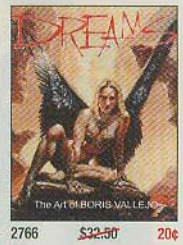

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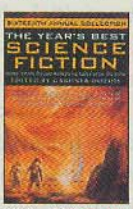

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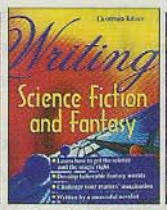

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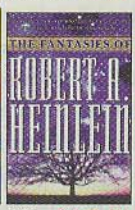

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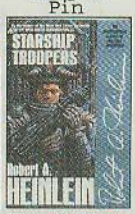

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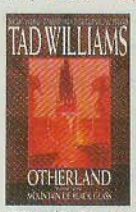

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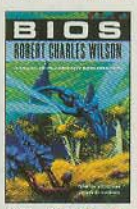

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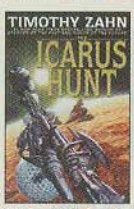

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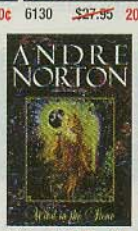

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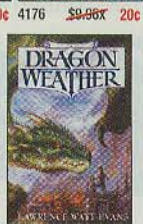

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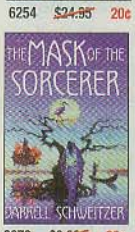

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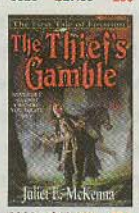

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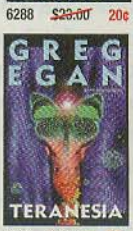

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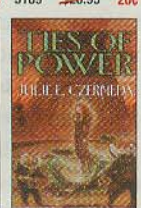

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Question of the Month

Respond to the Question of the Month or any other roleplaying topic by mailing "Forum," *Dragon® Magazine*, **1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, USA; dmail@wizards.com.** Include your full name and mailing address; we won't print a letter sent anonymously. We'll withhold your name or print your full address if you wish.

What's the cleverest trap you ever encountered in a game? Did it have an effect other than damage? What makes a trap good?

Online Gaming at its Best

In my experience, MUDs are far from the best place to find a good online roleplaying experience. Sure, some MUDs bill themselves as "roleplaying oriented," but as often as not that isn't the case. Even in the ones where it's true, the object of the game is still to kill as many computerized baddies as possible. Personally, if I want to fight computerized enemies, I play an RPG console game.

There is a better way to roleplay online. Internet Relay Chat, the medium demonized by many as nothing more than a nest of pedophiles, is actually frequented by some good roleplayers. I play in two IRC RPGs and run another. It's great fun, and it yields something you can't get from a live game: complete, readable (or more often, readable with a little GM editing) logs. Plus, thanks to the extra features added to the major IRC clients, one can seamlessly and instantly add sound effects and music (even one's own!) to the experience. I feel every roleplayer with any writing talent should try playing RPGs on IRC; then again, my EsperNet friends and I are always on the lookout for more good roleplayers, so I might be biased...

Nikki Johnson
Yarmouth, ME

Nifty Gadgets

I have been playing the D&D® game since the early 80s and have enjoyed the game more and more over the years. Each time I start a campaign, whether as a player or DM, I'm always discovering something new. I've been DMing a group for about four months. During that time, I have purchased the *AD&D® Core Rules CD-ROM 2.0* (and the *Core Rules Expansion*), the *Dragon Magazine* Archives, and—most recently—the *Forgotten Realms® Interactive Atlas*.

These products have been a great help in creating my newest campaign, which we started the other night. I decided to break out the laptop computer and run the game with these newest tools. After some initial adjustments, I have to tell you that it was one of the best campaigns I've had as a DM.

I didn't need to thumb through books to find out what a spell does; I had it in seconds from the *Core Rules*. Where are we? A click and a zoom, turn the laptop around and, "You're here." What's the tavern look like? Click. Here's the floor plan.

I prepared maps and printed them in advance for most of the campaign. The greatest part was random encounters. Set some filters, and let the computer generate an encounter complete with THAC0, hit points, and experience points. I recommend these three programs to every gamer with a computer. Oh, and lest I forget the dice generator, I finally managed multiple rolls without any dice falling off the table.

Jack Pinckert
Lake Wales, FL

The magic is static, inflexible, and predictable ... occasionally even foolish.

2nd-dary Concerns

Third edition is coming! Third edition is coming! It's official and you *did* ask for suggestions, so here are mine:

The current magic system is boring. Have you ever seen someone play three wizards who were identical except for stats, names, and hit points? It might be a terrible thing to say, but I no longer run mages because I fit into this category.

The magic is static, inflexible, and predictable, and the magic rules seem arbitrary and occasionally even foolish. Scrolls cannot be read without a *read magic* spell, but priests can't cast *read magic*, so they can't use scrolls. A mage can cast a spell with only a vocal component even if naked and hog-tied, but not if carrying a shield.

Perhaps what I am trying to say is that there is no unifying theme, no underlying logic, and no real method to the AD&D® magic system. It seems like a collection of rules created to justify a few spells and keep mages in a "weakling wizard" stereotype.

Speaking of foolish rules ... The party had just pulled in a major haul and was settling in for 6 months of downtime (the paladin had a big penance to work off). The thief decides to learn to read and write, so he hires a tutor and spends 4 or 5 hours a day learning to read. After 6 months, the GM tells the player to spend the proficiency slots and add Reading to his proficiency list. Unfortunately the player didn't have two free proficiency slots to spend. The thief had to go from 5th level to 12th level (over 3 game years) before he could read his native language without rolling his Read Languages skill. I don't know if

this situation is intentional or just an oversight, but it has always bothered me.

My last concern is not really game related; it's more like a pet peeve. Between the original 2nd-Edition books and the revised 2nd-Edition books, the quality of the artwork (How do I say this?) went to hell in a handbasket. Actually, it's not that bad, but it could have been better. The only example I feel I need to point out resides on the front cover of the *Player's Handbook*. It is impossible to hold your left arm in the manner depicted without having somebody stand behind you twisting your fist another 90 degrees or so, which really hurts. While this is a very minor and nit-picking concern, it also seems to reflect the level of attention and care paid to the details, not just of the book, but of the game itself.

On a better note, the illustrations appearing in the *DRAGON Magazine* articles are very good. If this artwork accurately reflects the quality of the art appearing in the 3rd Edition, I will eat my words without hesitation.

John C. Campbell
Anchorage, AK

Miniatures Rule!

Since the 1970s, the players in my group have used lead and pewter miniatures to varying degrees. I've happily contributed several hundred to the DM's arsenal. The main benefit of the minis is in visualizing your position relative to other beings and terrain. We avoid many disputes by simply playing our characters according to where they stand on the table. It is usually obvious that you can or cannot see an enemy, hide behind an object, and so on.

The DM generally looks at the mini chosen by a player prior to an adventure, determining what the player will possess at the outset of the game based on what the mini carries. A fancy cloak, well painted, is perhaps a *cloak of elvenkind*. A greatsword with ornate etching might indicate the PC is from a wealthy family or is a successful mercenary. A tome slung at the side might be a book the party is charged with returning to a great sorcerer. The minis lend a bit of history and detail to your story, even without playing out that history.

There is another quality to miniatures that is pretty difficult to measure: the pleasure of seeing "yourself" and being seen the same way by the other PCs. The best miniatures are works of art, painted or not. With a fancy paint job to highlight the details, it is possible to learn things about your character that you might not have thought of on your own.

I enjoy painting them as well. It is rewarding to take a sculptor's vision and refashion it to fit my own wants. I often modify or convert miniatures, changing weapons or adding items. All of the players in our game have customized minis, both mounted and on foot. All together, these things combine to inspire "ownership" of the character by the player. No one wants to lose a character

Something To Believe In

Patrick Curtin responds to the "Forum" Question of the Month from DRAGON Magazine *#265. (Do your PCs have something to fight against? Or do they have something to fight for? Is there a difference in your campaign?)*

Being a Dungeon Master off and on since 1979, I consider the players having something to fight for or against (often combining both) a key element in a good campaign.

The game I run involves a group of clerics and paladins tied to a good-aligned church supporting new human settlements in a wilderness area. Giving the PCs a tie to the community is a great story aid, since I can have their superiors order them to investigate things without having to fall on the old gaming chestnut of "the mysterious man in the tavern" adventure hook. It also gives them a sense of belonging to a community, which is a great DM tool as well. Several times the characters have had to scale back their reactions to monsters for fear of harming locals. They now feel very protective of this town, since it is their responsibility to protect it from outside forces. Making them members of an established organization also gives me an excellent way of rewarding them without showering them with riches. Getting a promotion or a commendation from the church means much more to them than a bag of gold or a magical ring ever would.

I have also introduced the characters to many of the church members and townspeople through roleplaying, which helps the players identify with them on a personal basis, rather than as a collection of statistics. When someone they have interacted with is in trouble, the reaction is a lot more earnest than the "a few townspeople are missing" plot. Although some gamers are of the less talk, more action school, I believe that a few minutes spent talking to the locals pay off.

At the same time, I try to make the campaign's villains as "personable" as I can as well. It doesn't take a lot of effort to come up with a name for the orc war-chief who pesters the party during a playing session. Having him insult the characters gets them to identify him as someone they don't like, making him a great roleplaying hook. The characters will want to find their enemy, allowing the DM to lead them where he or she wants them to be.

I also try to give monsters a basic understanding of tactics, which not only keeps the players on their toes but also helps low-level monsters remain formidable foes for a longer stretch of time. My players' party of 7th-level clerics and paladins are justly cautious when I announce the presence of an orcish war party in the vicinity. I always try to give the villains shadowy superiors as well. This gives the characters something to figure out and readies the next level of antagonists when they defeat the current ones.

Finally, I try to introduce shades of gray in my campaign. Along with the standard humanoid menace, the new settlement faces resistance from the local demihuman communities who view the recent incursion as a hostile invasion into their land. Going after a party of orcs that torches a few farms is easy, but what does the party do when a group of woodcutters goes missing after trespassing in an elven-occupied forest? The normal seek and destroy solutions don't always work in this scenario.

Spending time giving the characters more motivation than simple greed can often lead to some of the most memorable roleplaying.

Patrick Curtin
El Paso, TX

in a game, but to lose a character *and* a miniature to "retirement" is even worse.

In our game I don't stop with creating miniatures; I also use terrain to tell the tales. Fancy buildings can be a nice inn or burgermeister's home; some fencing makes a nice obstacle for marauding orcs; and a river dresses up a campsite for the party. As a model builder I have constructed lots of terrain and buildings for our games. The scale has ranged from 1 inch = 1,000 feet all the way up to 1 inch = 5 feet.

The key is to use minis and terrain to illustrate the scene, and then let the players see and tell the story (under the DM's loose guidance). When I DM, I make sure the terrain doesn't become the story. It is just a tool that lends dimension and relative positioning to our already overactive imaginations.

In conclusion, let me say that I am anxious to see what Wizards of the Coast will bring to my miniatures table.

Steve Rees
Anchorage, AK

The AD&D game pivots on imagination and roleplaying ...

Another Take on Miniatures

In response to your question of the month: As a DM, I use miniatures solely as a way to link the imaginations of everyone at the table physically. Sure, some people paint amazingly realistic figures and scenery, but I'd rather not have the table be the focus of the game, so I don't paint my figurines or create a battle board more lavish than a plastic grid with buildings outlined in marker.

The AD&D game pivots on imagination and roleplaying, not the world that we physically sit in while we play, and I've found that new players often focus more on an intricate battle board instead of imagining the scenario they're roleplaying. There are things miniatures just can't do that your mind can, like hear the echo of trickling water in a cave, wince at the smell of decay on a battlefield, or feel the warmth of the sun after a long stint in the Underdark.

The best way to use miniatures is to show the exact position of PCs when determining the outcome of a scenario, such as where a character is standing when the thief sets off a trap, or figuring out the area affected by a *fireball* spell.

Jeff Myrom
Hancock, M

Pumped for 3rd Edition

When I first read the news about the upcoming 3rd Edition of the D&D game, I was a little upset. Change is always a little frightening, especially when it involves your favorite RPG, and I was more than a little nervous about exactly what Wizards of the Coast would be changing about the game. After reading the 3rd Edition FAQ, however, my mind is at ease.

From what I have read thus far, everything that is being changed about the D&D game is being changed for the better. The new to-hit system, for example, is something that should have been done a long time ago. The original method required the memorization of a chart. The invention of THAC0 allowed the players to quickly determine the AC they had hit using a simple equation, but it was unnatural and a bit tricky to get used to. By making Armor Class go up as it improves, the need for a chart or an equation disappears. It seems like such an obvious thing, it makes me wonder why no one thought of this before.

I would like to commend whoever wrote the FAQ. It does an excellent job of explaining and justifying all of the changes that are being made to the D&D game. I would also recommend anyone with the means to please check out the FAQ. It is well worth your time.

Obviously, now I am very excited about 3rd Edition. As a matter of fact, if you talk to my fiancé, you would think I am obsessed. I'm not sure if that's entirely accurate, but I have made it my own personal mission to inform everyone I know about the merits of 3rd Edition. So far I have been completely successful. I don't know of a single person that I've talked to who isn't at least half as excited as I am. Any negativity I have run across can been attributed to a basic fear of change. People like the AD&D game, so they are afraid that if it is changed the game will be ruined. Ironically, many of the fears that people have expressed about 3rd Edition have been the same fears that people had right around the time AD&D 2nd Edition was released. (I discovered this through the magic of the *Dragon Magazine CD-Rom Archive*.) Looking back, it's obvious that 2nd Edition was a huge improvement over 1st Edition. It seems pretty safe to assume that 3rd Edition will be that much better than 2nd.

My only complaint about 3rd Edition is the wait. I understand that to make the new edition the best product that it can be, the wait is necessary. Still, I will be counting the days until August of 2000.

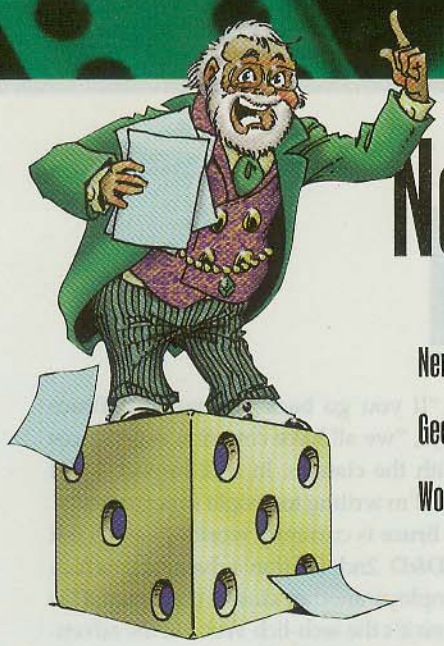
Andrew Branstad
Mason City, IA

New to 2nd Edition!

Hello. I am a long time gamer and I have recently purchased the 2nd-Edition *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master®* *Guide*, and *Monstrous Manual®* book. I must say I like the 1st Edition a bit more, as it had a magical feel and look. The *Dungeon Master Guide* I bought way back in '84 felt like a wizard's spellbook. The 2nd Edition is nice but just doesn't have the same feel. I look forward to the 3rd Edition with much anticipation. I have one complaint: At times I feel as though there are too many books to buy to have a detailed campaign. Do I need all these spell compendiums?

I am a fan of kung fu movies, and in a few of them, the heroes and villains display magical powers that I wish to incorporate into my campaigns. For example, in a movie called *Blade of Fury*, one fight took place on top of umbrellas held by bystanders. I plan to make a few changes so that a kung fu master would have physical abilities that are amazing, such as "Lightfoot," an ability that makes the user lighter so that he or she can jump farther and higher and walk on water. I have seen this ability in many martial arts films and anime. Can any DMs pass on some ideas or suggest films for me to watch to help my campaign?

Brian Libby
Kearns, UT



Nerds, Geeks, and Worse...

By Gary Gygax

Nerd *n* : an unpleasant, unattractive, or insignificant person.

Geek *n* : a carnival performer ... biting off the heads of live chickens.

Worse *adj.* : 2 **a** : more unfavorable.

Fighting and name-calling among game buffs is bad enough. When it happens that some people involved with the creation, development, production, and distribution of roleplaying games do the same, the situation becomes even more deplorable.

Perhaps it is because they were once called names such as nerd, geek, or worse. Now, as self-styled "professionals," they possibly compensate for their former humiliation through transference. As they *deal* with the product consumed by gamers, they have somehow risen *above* the common lot, if you will. The consumers are the geeks and dweebs and nerds, while gamers seeking higher status are "frothing goobs" to be exploited for their work ... and scorned when speaking with other "professionals."

Of course *we*, gamer to gamer, can refer to one another in such terms and not be insulted thereby. There are clearly positive connotations to some of those names, and even those with little redeeming quality about them can be used in a friendly manner. Used negatively, and this is a matter of no great difficulty to determine, they are hurtful. More importantly, they are not at all likely to be true in terms of *gaming*.

You better believe that this offends me. If you don't respect your fellows, those who are *also* your audience, what sort of product will you create for them? Clearly, the attitude of those producers who have contempt for "lesser" gamers will come out in their work.

After witnessing a particularly egregious spate of this online scorning of fans many months ago, such insults passing freely without objection from any participant other than myself, I have been seething, awaiting an opportunity to speak out to my fellow gamers about this abusive attitude. I believe my animosity for such individuals is a case of righteous indignation. I'll leave it to you, Discerning Readers, to be the judges of the matter.

Part and parcel of the condescending attitude, the superior air assumed, and the contempt shown for those who are dedicated game enthusiasts is an attitude of disdain for their intellect. While I have come to the conclusion, an opinion formed after decades of association with gamers of all sorts, that the typical roleplaying game fan is well *above* the norm, those of our supposed fellows who scorn us believe otherwise. Some actually assert *lesser* intellect, lack of social skills, and all manner of other nerd-like attributes place us in a class on a par with pariahs. It gets worse.

Of course, the average gamer *must* be a dolt.

Indeed, some creators openly boast that they design games not for gamers but for their own personal satisfaction and for the accolades of their peers. Now think about that. These high fellows are the nobility, others the peasants. How droll a conceit, that. Can there be doubt then that the products resulting from persons with such an attitude are likely to speak down to, insult or otherwise slight, and secretly sneer at the consumer?

Of course, the average gamer *must* be a dolt. Why? Because the majority of gamers don't find the products produced by this coterie of "professionals" marvelous. Doesn't that demonstrate lack of both intellect and taste?

We all likely have strong convictions about our games. Those that are favorites might be near sacrosanct in our minds. Those of us who create surely have pride in our work. Disagreement with one's opinions is often difficult to deal with. Rejection is painful. None of that justifies insulting gamers *en masse* or holding them in contempt.

While I don't mind accepting the name of nerd, geek, dweeb, or even goob (frothing or not) from someone who happily accepts the same appellation, I take exception otherwise. When it comes to the lot of us being insulted thus by one "above," I become a frothing adversary of the offender. It seems outrageous that such attitudes can be prevalent in a segment of people who earn their livelihood providing us with gaming products. If you agree, then don't hesitate to be vocally indignant whenever you see such intolerable attitude manifested by an individual, a group, or in the work they proffer.

Perhaps a bit of obvious displeasure, well put, will sound the wake-up call to the ones thinking themselves superior. We are all just people, gamers together, and mutual respect is the least to be asked. While camaraderie is evidenced widely, there are some bad apples who threaten to spoil that.

So there you have it for this time, but there's more to come. Attitude is another sore point, and I'll take that up when next we meet.

by Stephen Kenson

Bruce Cordell

It should come as no surprise that Bruce Cordell is one of the designers working on the first new adventures for the 3rd Edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. Bruce is already well known as the author of such AD&D® products as the Sea Devils Adventure Trilogy, *The Illithiad*, the *Shattered Circle*, *Bastion of Faith*, and the *Dungeon Builder's Guidebook*, as well as the *Tangents* sourcebook and *The Killing Jar* adventure for the ALTERNITY® game. He's also author of the D&D® 25th Anniversary adventures *Return to the Tomb of Horrors* (winner of the 1998 Origins Award for Best Adventure) and *Return to White Plume Mountain*, products that take classic D&D adventures to new heights of fiendishness.

Perhaps the secret to the design of these critically acclaimed adventures comes from Bruce's background as a wrestler and debater (complementary skills, indeed). Or maybe it owes something to his scientific background, reflected in a degree in Biology from the University of Colorado.

"Science requires you to be meticulous," Bruce says, "and I try to do that when I write. I like to make my work as complete as possible."

After several years working in the scientific field and dabbling in freelance game design, Bruce was offered a job working at TSR full time as a designer in 1995.

"No dummy," he says, "I abandoned science for fantasy." Cordell now lives in Seattle with his wife and their four cats. "I'm still grateful to be a part of this industry. It's great. I look forward to coming in to work each day, and I love what I'm working on."

Bruce considers a childhood love of the game part of the appeal of adventures like *Return to the Tomb of Horrors*. Many of the game designers currently working for TSR were young players and Dungeon Masters when adventures like *Tomb of Horrors* and *White Plume Mountain* were first published. For example, fellow TSR designer Monte Cook ran the original *Tomb of Horrors* for Bruce when they were in high school together.

Alignment Lawful Good (Neutral Tendencies)

Favorite ...

Hero Albert Einstein

AD&D® Setting FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Cheese Jalepeño Jack

Design *Return to White Plume Mountain*

Monster Gibbering Mouther

Ice Cream Caramel Vanilla swirl

Soundtrack *The Matrix*

Die d10

Quote "A closed mouth gathers no foot."

"If you go back far enough," Bruce says, "we all have common experiences with the classics. In that respect, I feel like I'm writing to people's memories."

Bruce is currently working on his last AD&D 2nd Edition adventure, which employs another classic character. This time it's the arch-lich Vecna in the adventure *Die, Vecna, Die!*, co-written with Steve Miller. The adventure takes place across three different D&D worlds: Oerth (home of the GREYHAWK® setting), the RAVENLOFT® campaign, and Sigil (the city center of the PLANESCAPE® setting). The adventure helps set the stage for D&D 3rd Edition cosmology, "or at least opens the door," as Bruce puts it, "loosening up some of the pre-conceived notions of the D&D cosmology, and giving DMs more freedom to tinker with it and come up with their own views of the multiverse."

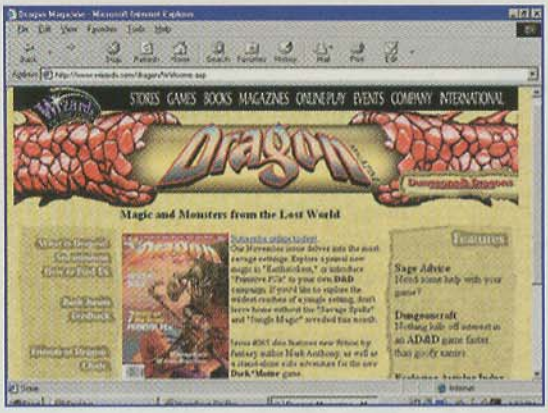
After he puts the finishing touches on *Vecna*, Bruce is planning to explore some of those possibilities as he begins working on one of the first adventures planned for 3rd Edition, with the working title *The Sunless Citadel*. In talking about plans for the future, Bruce reveals his secret to great adventure design.

"An adventure should be self-contained," he says. "It should have a wide variety of specific game material a DM can use with a minimum amount of tinkering and re-designing."

Much of this philosophy comes from Bruce's scientific love of utility. "I like to see a lot of extraneous stuff stripped away and a core of good, useful material presented in a logical, easy-to-use manner."

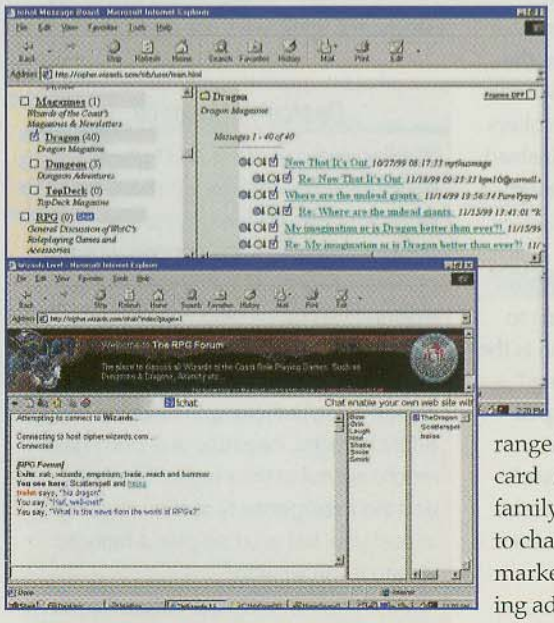
Ultimately, defining what makes a great adventure leaves even Bruce Cordell with a decidedly un-scientific conclusion: "When it's all over, the DM and players should say 'Wow, that was cool!'"

Online Gaming Programs



"Wizards Live!" provides fans with an opportunity to communicate directly with the people behind the products from Wizards of the Coast, including the popular DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® roleplaying game and the world's best-selling MAGIC: THE GATHERING® and POKÉMON™ trading card games.

Offering game enthusiasts a personal and interactive discussion forum, "Wizards Live!" highlights the latest news, special features, and original topics in the games industry with eight unique shows and specials that focus on a different game topic each week.



RPGA Tonight: Tune in every first and third Tuesday of the month as the RPGA® Network plays host to a wide range of programs for members and nonmembers alike.

RPG Hour: This is the place to be every first and third Friday as we alternate between the D&D®, ALTERNITY®, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES® Online Gaming Programs. Also included is special, up-to-the-minute prerelease news for the 3rd Edition D&D game.

Wizards Profiles: Get to know the decision-makers at Wizards of the Coast on "Wizards Profiles." This Q&A session every second and fourth Tuesday even features a quarterly appearance by the Head Wizard himself, Peter Adkison.

TCG Hour: Trading cards are the name of the game during this online session held every other week. The show alternates between the MAGIC: THE GATHERING game and other TCG-related topics.

From the Dragon's Mouth: Chat with the editors about the latest issues of *DRAGON*® and *DUNGEON*® magazines each first Sunday of the month, and get some sneak previews of what's to come!

The Designers' Guild: Get the inside scoop from the people responsible for your favorite games every second Sunday of the month. Topics range from game design (for trading card games, roleplaying games, family games, and electronic games) to chats with designers and artists to marketing discussions and freelancing advice.

Industry Edge: Want to know what it takes to get a job at Wizards of the Coast? Looking for tips on how to play a new game? Are you a concerned parent? Want to offer some fan feedback? "Industry Edge" every third Sunday of the month is just what you're looking for.

Sage Advice Live!: See if you can stump the Sage, Skip Williams, with questions about the D&D, ALTERNITY, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES roleplaying games. Tell the Sage what you thought of his most recent column in *DRAGON Magazine*, and hear the Sage's words of gaming wisdom every fourth Sunday of the month.

Specials: From time to time, Wizards Live! hosts special programs spotlighting new products and upcoming events.

Chat rooms are also available for freeform discussion: RPG Forum, TCG Forum, RPGA Forum, Wizards Forum, and more! Visit Wizards Chat at **www.wizards.com/chat.**

All programs run from 6 to 7 p.m. PST in the "Wizards Presents ..." chat room. Enthusiasts who need additional information or wish to participate in any Wizards Live! online chat can visit the Wizards of the Coast website at **www.wizards.com/chat.***

* Visitors need a screen name to visit the chat rooms. Screen name applications, available through **www.wizards.com/chat** can take a day or more to process.

COUNTDOWN

Wizards and Magic

No "Forum" debates are more heated than those on the D&D® magic system, and no other class typifies fantasy adventure like the wizard. This month, let's see what the 3rd Edition team has in store for the most famous class in the D&D game.

Why Wizards Rule in 3rd Edition

- More spells at lower levels
- Clear rules for creating magical items
- Familiars improve with level
- Improved school system
- Touch (and ray) spells can critical
- Your wizard can use a sword
- No racial restrictions
- Create scrolls at 1st level
- Metamagic feats
- Counterspells

Back to School

In the 3rd Edition game, the "schools" of magic are no longer in opposition to one or two others. Instead of making a choice from this circle of metaphysical oppositions, wizards simply choose a "favored" school in a manner not unlike choosing a major in college. Rather than losing access to one or more other schools for balance, wizards must devote more "attention" to the more powerful fields.

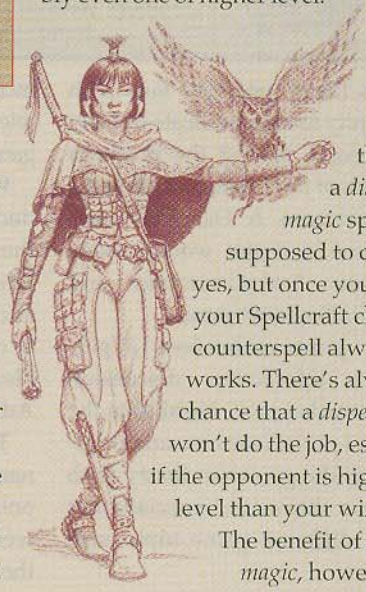
"When you focus on one school of magic by becoming a specialist," explains designer Monte Cook, "you have to sacrifice your studies in another field or fields. Thus, specializing in major, hard-to-master schools like Transmutation require that you sacrifice studying either another major school, like Evocation, or 2–3 of the smaller, easier schools."

The difference is that the player chooses which schools to sacrifice, so not all invokers give up Enchantment spells. Instead, you have more freedom to design the wizard you want to play.

Counterspelling

One of the niftiest additions to spell casting in 3rd Edition is the option of "counterspelling." Say you have a *fireball* spell memorized, and you notice—after a successful Spellcraft check—that one of your opponents is about to cast the same spell. Rather than take your chances on a saving throw for half damage, you can cast your own *fireball* as a counterspell, neutralizing your opponent's attack.

"Every spell is its own counterspell," explains lead designer Jonathan Tweet. "By counterspelling, a spellcaster can shut down an enemy spellcaster, possibly even one of higher level."



Isn't this what a *dispel magic* spell is supposed to do? Well, yes, but once you make your Spellcraft check, a counterspell always works. There's always a chance that a *dispel magic* won't do the job, especially if the opponent is higher level than your wizard. The benefit of *dispel magic*, however, is that it can dispel the effects of a spell after it is cast.

Design Philosophy

"Earlier versions of the D&D game directed player choices with hard limits, while the new version guides the player's choices by the consequences of those choices. For example, the 1st Edition D&D game said that half-orcs just plain couldn't be wizards, and in the new rules they can be. It's a lousy choice if you're looking to have a powerful character, because you won't get much use out of your higher Strength, and the Intelligence reduction is going to hurt you, but you can play a half-orc wizard if you want to."

—Jonathan Tweet

Metamagic Feats

Better and more rare than skills, "feats" allow your characters to do truly heroic acts. Some of them are designed specifically for spellcasters, and these are known as "metamagic feats." On a successful use, they enhance spellcasting in any one of a number of ways.

For instance, the Quicken Spell feat essentially allows a wizard to cast a spell and still perform another action in the same round—even if that other action is to cast another spell! Still Spell and Silent Spell let your wizard cast spells even when bound or silenced, respectively. And the formidable Maximum Spell feat lets a wizard cast a spell for optimum effect—for instance, a *lightning bolt* spell that automatically causes 6 points of damage for each die. The *Player's Handbook* details the powers and restrictions of these and other metamagic feats.

3rd Edition Familiars

The 3rd Edition familiars are no longer the frail creatures of earlier editions. Not only are their special abilities better balanced—you won't be sending away that toad anymore—but familiars improve as your wizard advances in level. Not only does a familiar's Armor Class increase but so does its Intelligence. Best of all, familiars gain special abilities like commanding lesser animals of its type and spell resistance at the higher levels.

Here's a peek at the starting special abilities of the basic familiars:

Familiar	Special
Bat	None
Cat	Wizard gains +2 bonus on Move Silently checks
Hawk	None
Owl	Has low-light vision; wizard gains +2 bonus on Move Silently checks
Rat	Wizard gains +2 bonus on Fortitude saves
Raven	Speaks one language
Snake (Tiny)	Poisonous bite
Toad	Wizard gains +2 Constitution
Weasel	Wizard gains +2 on Reflex saves

New Standards

Perhaps the most subtle but sweeping change to magic in 3rd Edition is the "cleaning up" of the general rules for spellcasting.

"We've embraced the types of magic that D&D has always used," says Monte, "but we've clarified them and made them consistent. For example, we have defined what it means for a spell to be a summoning spell. All summonings now work within the same parameters."

Standardizing spell parameters was actually the second step. First, the designers had to define each of those parameters in clear, concrete terms. For instance, what determines whether a caster can terminate his or her own spell?

"A dismissable spell is one that the caster can cancel at any time," explains Monte. "For example, a *detect evil* spell can be ended at any time by a caster who doesn't want to worry about looking for evil anymore. A *wall of force*, once erected, remains for the duration regardless of the wishes of the caster, unless he or she uses *dispel magic*. Dismissable spells are clearly marked as such in their durations."

Our favorite standardization is the definition of ray attacks, which are always ranged touch attacks in the 3rd Edition game. On one hand, you must roll to hit with a touch attack, but that means you can achieve critical hits. On average, that doesn't make rays much more dangerous than area-of-effect spells, but the first time you critical on a *ray of frost* spell, you might feel differently!

Stacking

Questions about which spells and magical items work in conjunction with others have plagued DMs throughout the first two editions of the D&D game. In 3rd Edition, the answers are always clear.

"To determine how different magical effects work together (or don't work together), we figured out what the effect is really doing," explains Jonathan. "For instance, a *ring of protection* makes incoming attacks veer away. We call that a 'deflection' effect. The bonus on magic armor, however, represents how much better the armor is than normal armor. It's a completely different effect, and for that reason the two bonuses 'stack,' or work together."

"Now if someone casts *protection from evil* on you, that gives you a deflection bonus, too. If you have two deflection bonuses, only the better one counts."

Since the deflection bonus from *protection from evil* is only +2, it won't help you if you already have a +3 bonus from a magic ring."

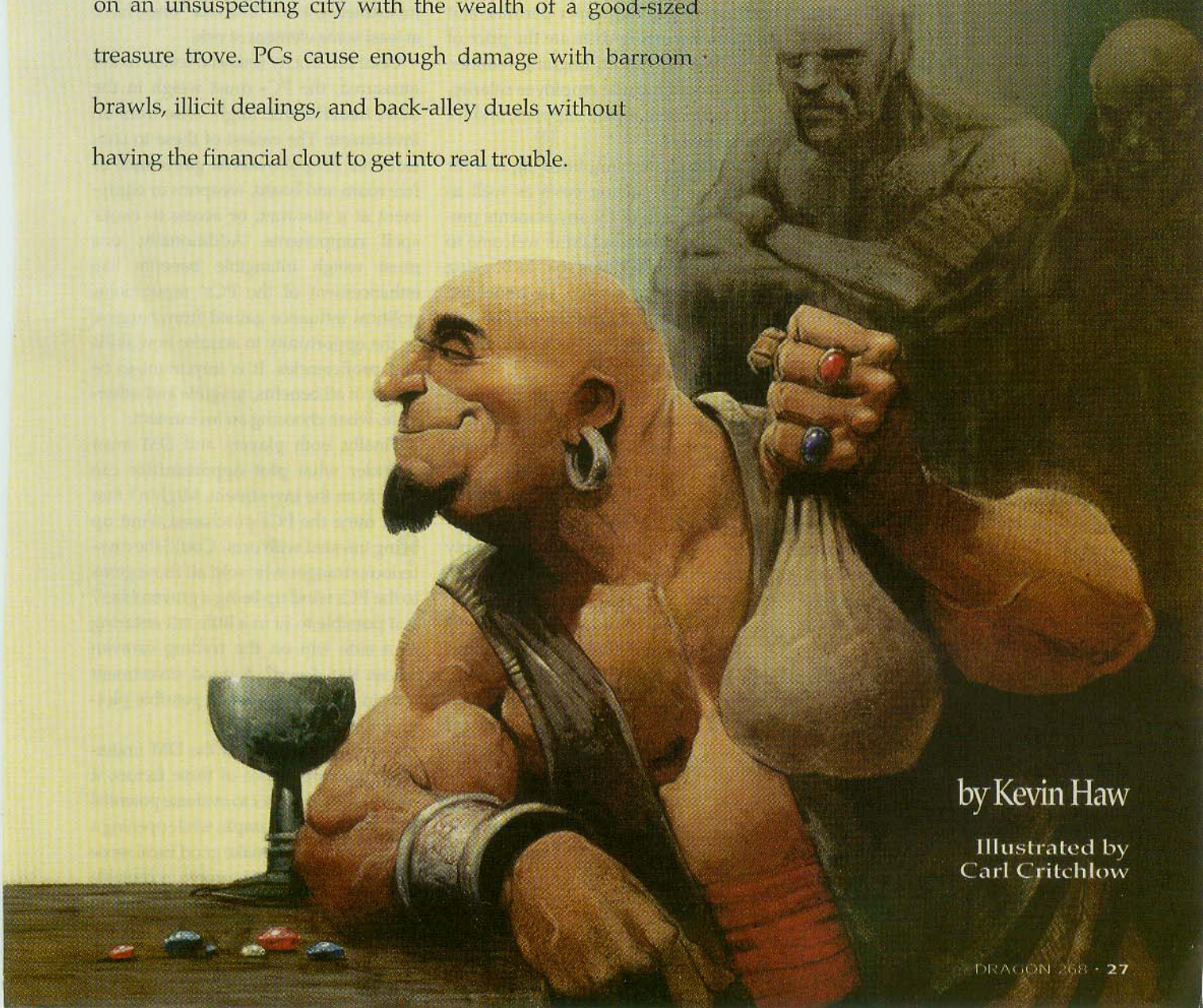
Watch this space next month as we reveal a few secrets about the new rogue (formerly thief) class. Until then, it's six months and counting....

Investment Strategies for the Medieval Adventurer

Ill Gotten Gains

It has often been said that the only certainties in life are death and taxes. This holds true not only in our mundane reality but also in AD&D® campaigns. Oddly, the same players who exhibit ingenuity and resourcefulness in cheating the specter of death are often stymied when the dreaded tax collector approaches. In fact, with taxes being what they are in most campaigns, it is surprising anyone adventures in the first place. After all, why risk your skin skulking around drafty, undead-infested catacombs just so the government can claim half the take?

Naturally, the real reason why taxes, tithes, and fines are so high in AD&D worlds has nothing to do with government policy. It's game balance, not economics, that drives the tax rates and cost of living in a fantasy multiverse. And why not? No sane DM would unleash a band of adventurers on an unsuspecting city with the wealth of a good-sized treasure trove. PCs cause enough damage with barroom brawls, illicit dealings, and back-alley duels without having the financial clout to get into real trouble.



by Kevin Haw

Illustrated by Carl Critchlow

Nevertheless, having a good chunk of your hard-won gold snatched away without so much as a saving throw is enough to make even the most dedicated roleplayer contemplate taking up a less frustrating hobby—like stamp collecting. It's far too easy for a referee to lose sight of how the players feel and tax the PCs into ruin, justifying it in the name of game balance. This sort of communications breakdown creates grudges and polarizes a playing group, detracting from the fun and excitement that could have been had by all.

It's far too easy for a referee to lose sight of how the players feel and tax the PCs into ruin.

The crux of the matter is the apparent conflict between people on both sides of the DM's screen: Players want the chance to spend their money rather than see it all go into the coffers of some fictional government. DMs want to keep control of a campaign and often use the local economy to bring the PCs back into line. Fortunately, a solution can be drawn from our mundane world that should satisfy both parties. Game balance is still preserved, but the gaming environment is enhanced rather than corrupted. In fact, a good DM can not only convince the players to part with their gold but also have them eagerly lining up to do it again.

The solution is simple: Invest your loot.

What makes a good investment?

Usually when one thinks of an "investment," stocks, bonds, and high-pressure salesmen in three-piece suits come to mind. While this is all well and good for our modern age, one must remember the broader definition of an investment. An investment is any endeavor promising some benefit, financial or otherwise, in return for risking money or time of one's own.

Defining a *good* investment is a trickier thing. Rather than trying to deal with all the realities of investing, here are five things to keep in mind when spending those hard-earned gold pieces in a roleplaying campaign.

The first concern is, of course, the **cost**. The most golden of investments is worthless if you can't afford it in the first place. The startup costs (sometimes called capital) consist of any expenses required to get the endeavor up and running: purchasing or leasing land, hiring transportation, paying assorted bribes and fees to get the proper permits, and so forth. Recurring costs are the price of doing business in an ongoing manner. These would include employee salaries, rent, equipment repair, supplies, and (of course) taxes.

Table 1 shows simplified figures for startup and recurring costs as well as income for each of the investments presented here. While a DM is welcome to elaborate on them, doing so risks bogging down the game session in unneeded details. As a rule of thumb, it is best to keep all such calculations as simple as possible.

The way to pay these costs is to use the **income** generated by the investment. The money left over once all the costs have been paid is called the **profit** from the investment and can be spent as the investor sees fit. Before doing so, however, one should be aware of not simply how much income is expected from an investment but also the time frame in which it is received. Does it come in a single, large lump sum, as at the end of a trading caravan, or does it trickle in over months or years, as with an inn or tavern? Whichever it is, the PCs should take this into account when making future plans.

An investment's **risk** is simply the chance that something untoward might occur so that the investor does not see the expected return. High-risk investments tend to be ones subject to catastrophic loss, where all the money put up can be lost. An example of this would be having a fully loaded trading ship lost in a storm at sea or a merchant caravan destroyed by bandits. Low risk investments are ones that are subject only to minor problems that represent a reduced income, but not the loss of all initial capital. This would include the drop in the sale price of a trade item when it reaches market (causing lowered income) or an unexpected tax imposed by a city (resulting in increased costs). As a general rule, high-risk investments tend to offer the potential for higher profits, while low risk investments promise a smaller but more reliable, return. Note, however, that all investments, even "low risk" ones, have at least some element of risk.

Once the strictly financial concerns are measured, the PCs must weigh in the other **benefits** that might arise from an investment. The easiest of these to consider are simple material gains such as free room and board, weapons or equipment at a discount, or access to exotic spell components. Additionally, one must weigh intangible benefits like enhancement of the PCs' reputations, political influence gained from success, or the opportunity to acquire new skills and proficiencies. It is important to be aware of all benefits, tangible and otherwise, when choosing an investment.

Finally, both players and DM must consider what **plot opportunities** can arise from the investment. Mightn't that gold mine the PCs purchased wind up being infested with orcs? Could the mysterious stranger who sold all those gems to the PCs wind up being a graverobber? Is it possible to fit in a little adventuring as a side trip on the trading caravan across the desert? A good investment should offer a number of possible plotlines to choose from.

Once the players and the DM understand the importance of these factors, it becomes much easier to evaluate potential investments. For example, while opening a cheese shop might make good fiscal sense (reasonable cost, good income, acceptable risk, and the benefit of all the cheese you

Table 1: Investment Cost and Income Table

Investment	Startup Cost	Recurring Cost (Monthly)	Income (Monthly)
Tavern/Inn	18 months maximum income[1]	50% maximum monthly income[1]	45% + d20% of maximum monthly income[1] plus 1% for every 1% spent over base recurring cost
Trading Expedition	Transportation + provisions + one month base salary[2]	**Monthly:** salary[3] + maintenance[4] + animal feed **When purchasing goods:** cost/item × quantity × rarity[5] × quantity discount[6]	**When selling goods:** (Cost/item × rarity[5] × rarity) +/– 2d10%
PC Organization	Headquarters/facilities + one month base salary[2,7]	Salary[3,7] + maintenance[4]	**Roll 1d6** 1 1d4% surplus above costs 2–4 Break even 5–6 1d10% shortfall
Mercenary Unit	Equipment + mounts + weapons + one month salary[2]	Salaries[3] + animal feed	Costs + 10–50% (determined randomly or by roleplaying)

1. An inn's maximum income assumes every bed is rented out nightly with a paying customer (30 gp/month for private rooms, 3 gp/month for common room). A tavern assumes a paying customer in every seat for two meals a day (18 gp/month).

2. If the expected term of employment is greater than 6 months, an employee will demand a one-month "signing bonus."

3. Modify salaries as follows: +50% if employee travels from home and employer must provide food, +50% if shelter must be provided, +100% if both must be provided. Does not apply to one month "signing bonus."

4. Any piece of property valued over 1000 gp (building, ship, and so on) costs 1% of the base cost each month to maintain.

5. Rarity multiplier: 1 = common, 1.5 = uncommon, 2 = rare, 4 = very or extremely rare

6. Large quantities of items are wholesaled as follows: 1.0 for 1–20 items, 0.9 for 21–99, 0.75 for 100 or more.

7. Minimum cost for an "employee" of a PC organization is 5 gp/month, even if they are volunteers. Further, if an employee must hide his or her affiliation (that is, a secret organization), add 100% to the cost unless the person is a spy or assassin (who is already paid to be "undercover").

can eat), it offers few plot opportunities (the PCs would be too busy researching new recipes for extra sharp cheddar to fight the forces of evil). Conversely, pooling all the PCs' funds and putting a bounty on the head of your worst enemy might enhance the plot, but it certainly won't help the PCs retire in style.

Much as there are any number of investments a person can make in the mundane world, there are many ways PCs can spend their loot in the AD&D multiverse. To spark the imagination, here are the outlines of four basic schemes. While they are intended to fit into nearly any campaign, the DM and players must do some adapting to make them work. Fortunately, that is merely the first step in a fun and rewarding experience.

A Place of Your Own: Running an Inn or Tavern

In most AD&D campaigns, the local inn or tavern serves a vital role. As a center for information gathering, a place to recruit fresh cannon fodder, or simply as a haven offering food and shelter, these facilities provide a much needed headquarters for adventurers. Without these services, a campaign would be more akin to a miserable, dangerous, extended camping trip than an epic adventure.

Through some odd twist of plot or fate, most of these establishments are run by retired adventurers. Whether it's a grizzled veteran you seek or a former master thief you wish to consult, most PCs need look no further than their bartender, innkeeper, or stablehand to find a fellow dungeoneer, recently retired. In fact, a brief survey of fantasy fiction and AD&D modules might lead one to believe that many hamlets require dungeoneering experience as a precondition to receiving a license to sell ale.

Naturally, a PC need not wait for retirement to invest in a tavern or inn. With the proceeds from a moderate hoard, a group of adventurers can pool their shares and buy an establishment outright. Even with a miserly treasury, the PCs might be able to secure a loan to make up the difference in the needed capital. Regardless of how one gets the funding, most find the effort worthwhile.

The first benefit is the most obvious—a permanent headquarters for the PCs. By commandeering some private apartments, they can live rent-free. Even if the PCs lose their last copper piece, they'll always have a

Inn/Tavern

Through one devious plot or another, the PCs have convinced the owner of their favorite watering hole to retire and sell the place to them. Examining **Table 1,** the DM sees that the base purchase price of a tavern is 18 months' income. The inn has ten modest private rooms (10 × 5 sp/day × 30 days/month = 150 gp/month), space for thirty in the common room (30 × 1 sp × 30 days = 90 gp/month), and enough tables and chairs to serve thirty people at each meal (30 × 3 sp × 30 days × 2 meals/day = 540 gp/month). Thus, the place can generate a maximum income of 780 gp (150 + 90 + 540) per month. For 18 months, the PCs must hand over 14,040 gp just to buy the place. The DM decides that this does an adequate job of draining the PCs' coffers and uses this figure without modification. If the PCs had substantially more or less in their treasury, the DM might have adjusted the cost accordingly.

After the sale, the PCs decide to convert four apartments into private quarters for themselves. This means that, even though they paid for ten private rooms when purchasing the inn, only six are used to calculate the recurring costs and income. The new maximum income is 720 gp/month (90 + 90 + 540). The monthly cost to run a tavern is simply 50% of the maximum income, or 360 gp/month for our heroes. This is the cost to keep the doors open without making modifications to the place. This figure includes salaries for the help, consumables such as ale and food, and basic maintenance.

Every month, the DM must determine how much income the place generates. If the PCs put no real effort into bringing in customers, the amount is simply 46% to 65% (45 + d20) of the maximum cost, reflecting that many guests in the rooms and patrons in the tavern. The PCs can increase this figure by spending money every month on renovations, better food, advertising, and so forth, at a rate of 1% income to 1% cost. (For example, spending 60% maximum income each month generates 56% to 75%.) The DM might also impose +10% or –10% modifier to reflect special circumstances, like a local religious festival bringing in more guests or damaging rumors about the place. No matter how much the PCs spend, the place never generates more than 100% of the maximum income. The PCs can attempt to raise the price of food and rooms, but this risks driving away customers.

place to sleep (or meditate, or hide from the authorities ... whatever). A permanent residence is also easier to secure against any heavily armed, late-night visitors. Finally, it allows a wizard to set up a laboratory, the warrior a trustworthy stable for his steed, and a rogue a perfect place to cache any miscellaneously acquired wealth.

Of course, all this pales next to the greatest benefit of this investment—intelligence gathering for the adventurers. Think of the hours your PCs have spent trawling taverns, speakeasies, and other dives in search of information. Well, now information comes to them. Simply by staying alert, the PCs can gather rumors, whispers, or stories that come through their door.

With a little work, the PCs can turn information gathering into a science. Imagine a group of PCs secretly buying controlling interest in a tavern, so as not to alert rival adventurers. They give free lodging to any bard who walks in their door with a tale to tell. Prices on ale are lowered to break even, making the place attractive to large crowds. Down-on-their-luck adventurers are allowed to run up tabs and drink as much as they want. Finally, word goes out on the street that the establishment has become the place to scheme, plot, and engage in "underground commerce." While everyone is at their tables, swapping lies and discussing plans, the PCs' wizard is in a soundproofed apartment with a *crystal ball* and a ream of parchment, scribbling down every interesting whisper uttered in the common room.

If the players are convinced that they want to sink some of their treasure into an inn or tavern, see the sidebar for an example of how the DM might choose to work the game mechanics of the venture.

Once the benefits and costs to the characters are weighed, how can the DM use an inn to help the plotline of the campaign?

As touched on earlier, the most obvious way to launch an adventure is by having a rumor or lead overheard during the course of the tavern's business. Every time a bard shares news of banditry up the road or a deserter from a campaign tells his story over ale, there is a potential for adventure. In fact, a good DM will see to it that the PCs receive a regular deluge of leads, perhaps five or ten a night. It becomes an exercise for the players, however, to find which ones are worthless, which are misleading, and which are outright lies.

Other adventures might be centered around information gleaned from the PCs' ownership of the establishment. Maybe a traveler leaves behind saddlebags that turn out to be packed with relics from a looted shrine, sparking a quest to capture the thieves and return the goods to their proper place. Perhaps some assassins use the tavern to plot the murder of a prominent noble, and the PCs must not only foil the scheme but also uncover the individual who hired the villains in the first place. Maybe a well-known NPC adventurer hopes to barter away a sizable room and bar tab by handing over a treasure map of questionable worth.

Finally, the establishment itself might become the backdrop for an adventure. A group of fellow merchants might approach the PCs, begging them to stop ruffians from extorting protection money from local tradesmen. Or perhaps an unpopular local official—maybe the tax collector—meets a violent end in a rented room, and the PCs must find the killers or have the establishment shut down as a criminal nuisance. On the other hand, rumors might arise that a previous owner of the property hid a cache of stolen loot somewhere on the premises. Not only would the PCs need to determine the truth of such tales but also they'd be kept busy fending off mobs of treasure hunters intent on knocking holes in the walls and ripping up the floorboards.

With a little work, the PCs can invest in their favorite watering hole and make it pay off both in coin and in adventure.

Trading Expedition

Without trade, there would be no civilization as we know it. Unless goods and material flow freely between towns and cities, it is nearly impossible to maintain even a Bronze Age level of technology. Without trade, a mighty nation becomes nothing more than a scattering of feeble settlements.

Most likely, your PCs have already contributed to this noble venture by serving as caravan guards. In fact, most DMs portray trading expeditions as an excuse for the inevitable bandit attack that follows; however, this venue offers much greater challenges for PCs willing to launch their own trading expedition.

Before the characters spend one copper, though, they must decide what to sell, where to sell it, and where to acquire it in the first place. At first glance, this seems like a simple exercise. A group of PCs need merely look at what the other traders are doing and just copy them, right? Well, that might not be the best approach.

Merchants, as a general rule, do not appreciate competition. Unless the PCs are experienced traders, they'll face everything from unfair pricing to sabotage to assassination attempts (depending on how ruthless the competition). Rather than going head-to-head with established traders, the PCs should use their unique talents and experiences to their advantage. Maybe the PCs discovered a distant kingdom in their earlier travels, giving them (at least for a while) an exclusive link between this new market and their homeland. Or they might have saved a reclusive colony of fantastic creatures, putting them in a unique position to trade for their rare and wonderful goods. Finally, the PCs might simply be the toughest, meanest bunch of hombres around, allowing them to travel perilous routes that no right-thinking merchant would ever dream of taking.

If this "edge" does not spell out what must be done, the players might have to do some brainstorming to come up with the right combination of goods and markets. They should examine the equipment lists in the *Player's Handbook* and other publications such as *Aurora's Whole Realms Catalog* for inspiration, but they should remember some general rules.

1. Stick with one or two simple, nonperishable items. Hauling dozens of different goods makes keeping inventory difficult and can bog down a gaming session with complex, tedious haggling.

2. Buy things the PCs know about. A wizard can determine whether a load of spell components is worth the offering price; a warrior knows a quality blade on sight.

3. Never overlook buying large quantities of common, cheap items. Hauling half a ton of horseshoes might not be as glamorous as selling a dozen swords crafted by a master smith, but the startup cost is lower, and everyone needs horseshoes.

4. Consider carrying lightweight luxury items in a saddlebag, and don't give much leeway in your haggling. If they don't sell, it's no great inconvenience to carry the items to your next stop, unlike with the principal wares.

Now that the PCs know where they're going and what they're taking, it's a good idea to plot the trip day by day on a map. Doing so lets the PCs select the appropriate means of transport (mule train, wagons, rowboats, and so forth) and also helps them decide what kind of personnel are needed. By playing this "what if" game on possible routes, the PCs become more involved in the plot line.

With a little work, the PCs can turn information gathering into a science.

Finally, the PCs should use the local merchant's guild and personal contacts to arrange as many deals as possible before they set out. If they already have a buyer lined up for their goods when they arrive (even at a slightly lower price), they're way ahead of the game. Likewise, if they can arrange to have a load of goods to pick up for the return leg of the trip, they're turning a profit both coming and going.

With all the preparations done, it is time for the PCs to set out. See the "Trading Expedition" sidebar for an example of how a DM might run one caravan journey.

Plot possibilities are not limited to the

Trading Expedition

Several players have always been interested in Magellan's voyage and have decided that the PCs should be the first to circumnavigate their world, trading goods at ports as they go. The DM decides that the PCs need a caravel (see the *Dungeon Master® Guide*, Chapter 14), a captain (50 gp/month), first mate (20 gp/ month), and 30 sailors (5 gp/month each) to crew the vessel. The DM also decides that the "pay for food" modifier in the salary table in this article applies, increasing salaries by another 50%. ("Pay for housing" does not apply as everyone lives on the ship.) The sum of the crew's salaries is 220 gp, which is then modified to 330 gp/month.

In addition to the ship itself (10,000 gp), the PCs decide they want to arm each officer with a longsword and small shield (18 gp × 2 = 36 gp) and each sailor with a buckler and short sword (11 gp × 30 = 330 gp). For emergencies, they buy 3 months' iron rations (5 gp × 40 crew and PCs × 12 weeks = 2,400 sp), two 500-gallon tuns of wine (40 gp), and water (24 barrels for 48 gp—rain water itself is free).

Adding the cost of provisions and weapons (2,854 gp), the ship itself (10,000 gp), and 1 month crew salary because the mission is expected to exceed 6 months (220 gp—no 50% modifier required) gives an startup cost of 13,074 gp. The monthly recurring cost is 430 gp, reflecting crew salaries (330 gp) plus 1% the cost of the ship for maintenance (100 gp). This covers the basic costs just to operate a ship and travel from port to port without accounting for actually buying and selling trade goods.

For their first load of merchandise, the DM decides that the ship's hold can contain 1,000 gp worth of glassware, 2,500 gp of copper ingots, and 1,000 gp of lamp oil. All these items are common (multiplier 1.0), and the indicated quantities are in the "100+" category (multiplier 0.75). This means the PCs actually need to pay only (1,000 + 2,500 + 1,000) × (1.0) × (0.75) = 3,365 gp for all the trading goods. The ship will only generate income when it gets into port and PCs sell some goods. When this occurs, the DM consults the rarity modifiers in the table and determine the sale price of the items, then rolls 1d6 to determine whether the price is higher (1–3 on 1d6) by 2d10% or lower (4–6) by 2d10%. The PCs can then use that money to pay the monthly cost of the ship and to buy goods for the next port, repeating the process as they travel around the globe.

traditional "bandit hunting" scenario. Merchants are people of great importance to smaller settlements, providing a lifeline to the outside world. If evil forces wish to destroy a town, attacking this lifeline (and the PCs) is a logical first step. On the other hand, the PCs might find themselves walking into the middle of a feud when they show up in a village, as each faction tries to sway these important visitors to their own side. Other adventures might arise as the expedition travels and finds itself encountering unpleasantness like civil unrest, natural disaster, invasion, or plague. A trading expedition provides an ideal vehicle for the DM to place the characters in "the right place at the right time."

Another great thing about running the expedition is that it allows the PCs to make side trips as they wish. They might plan their route to take them to a distant city with a grand library, allowing the PCs to research spells or to find clues to the larger riddles driving the campaign. The journey might pass near a promising cave complex, allowing the PCs to investigate while the rest of the expedition rests up in the nearby town. Perhaps the trading expedition is simply a ruse, and the PCs' real goal is to spy out enemy cities for their monarch. Maybe the PCs don't even know about the terrain ahead, and their primary purpose is simply to map unknown lands, as Magellan did himself.

There are many roads to travel as merchants, and most of them lead to adventure. It is even possible to build a campaign around a single, epic trading journey. Remember that the journeys of Marco Polo, Magellan, and the Conquistadors were driven by an interest in trade, not in exploration for its own sake. No matter what goods they trade or where their travels take them, the PCs will find life as merchants enriching both to the soul and to the purse.

There are many roads to travel as merchants, and most of them lead to adventure.

Getting Organized

No matter how successful PCs are in battling evil, there's always more work to be done. Just when you think you've wiped out the problems in one area, trouble springs up somewhere else. It might take years or decades, but it's only a matter of time before some new threat grows to replace the defeated one. By that time, the PCs might be gumming their food in a Home for Retired Adventurers. In this case, it's doubtful they'd fare well in another earth-shattering confrontation with the forces of eternal evil. After going through the cycle a few times, evil might just win.

This is why the PCs should leave a legacy of some sort. Every hard-fought bit of knowledge should be written down, every weakness of the enemy recorded, every bizarre tactic and dirty trick that worked should be committed to paper or stone tablet. Preparations should be made for the time when new heroes must be recruited. The torch must be passed, so that, when the next battle begins, the forces of good are ready.

Forming an organization dedicated to continuing the fight is not just a good idea but a duty to any group of self-respecting heroes. Once the PCs have realized that this is the route for them (and their money) to take, they must decide exactly how their organization is to be structured, how many members they want to recruit, and where the group's base should be located. Of the many possible types of organizations, three models are most obvious.

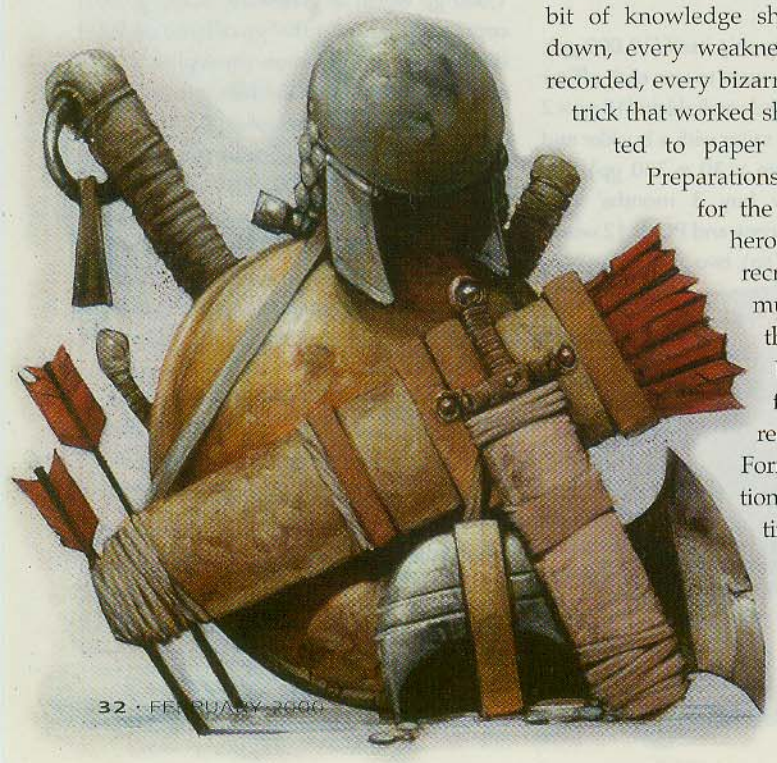
In the **Round Table** model, the PCs form an order of adventurers dedicated to fighting the forces of evil. Whether dedicated to specific goal ("Wipe out all necromancers") or simply serving their country like Arthur's knights, these individuals would proudly proclaim their membership, perhaps wearing special clothing or jewelry with the group's seal as a kind of uniform.

The **Secret Cabal** model contrasts sharply with the "Round Table" model. Members conceal their identities from outsiders and (perhaps) each other to protect the organization from enemies, as with a spy ring or partisan army in a foreign land. An excellent real-life example of this would be the Underground Railroad that smuggled fugitive slaves to safety before the Civil War.

In **The Academy** model, PCs feel the need to spread wisdom and knowledge and open some sort of school or university. The stereotypical example is the sorcery academy, but religious monasteries or a Cartographer's Guild (dedicated to exploring unknown lands) would also fit this mold. Such an institution should consider its purpose twofold: the education of students and the expansion of the entire field of knowledge.

No matter how it is structured, running an organization like this is not cheap. For every active member (or "employee")of the organization, count on a minimum cost of 5 gp/month to pay salaries and other expenses. If the member is a specialist of some sort (scholar, spy, and so on), consult the salary listed in the *Dungeon Master Guide* and use the greater value.

Income from an organization is tricky to calculate. One thing is certain: The PCs will never get rich this way. Even when all the tithes collected from a religious order are tallied or all the tuition of the students in an academy are compiled, a budget shortfall (say, 1d10%) is quite likely. If this happens, the PCs must make



up the difference from their own pockets or convince a wealthy patron to make up the difference. Failing that, the organization shrinks by the same percentage as the shortfall as members leave in disgust at the PCs' poor management skills.

See the "PC Organization" sidebar to look at how a DM might handle one such venture.

All this might sound like a lot of work, but the PCs have the benefit of total access to their organization's facilities. This might take the form of something as simple as a meager bowl of rice and a hard bed in a monastery's dormitory or something as lavish as richly appointed apartments suitable for a baron. Other facilities might include libraries, laboratories, and workshops in a sorcery academy or gymnasiums and weaponsmiths for an order of knights. Finally, the PCs might benefit from access to maps, reports, or other intelligence that will help them in their personal adventures.

From a player's and DM's standpoint, there's an even bigger benefit to taking on the headache of running such a circus—there's never a shortage of problems to build an adventure around! Merely setting up an organization (obtaining funding, recruiting members, securing the headquarters, and so on) could easily be the subject of a half-dozen gaming sessions. Once begun, the adventures begin racking up quickly.

Perhaps villagers in a distant province petition the PCs' order of knights to combat an orcish invasion. Maybe one of the group's highly placed spies in the court of a foreign king suddenly stops reporting, so the PCs must investigate discretely. Or perhaps rumors begin to surface about an ancient magical text being discovered in a distant land, a perfect addition to the group's library. Finally, a patron might call in favors and demand the PCs perform a mission on his or her behalf.

In addition to keeping the founding PCs occupied, an institution as discussed here promises an even more intriguing class of adventure: the multigenerational campaign. In it, the players retire their original PCs at some point to create 1st-level characters who are members of the organization. The new campaign takes place years, decades, or even centuries after the original one. This lets the DM recycle some of the material he or she worked so hard developing in the first place, while still throwing a few curves at the players by allowing the world to change a little in the ensuing years. Old allies might change allegiances, and new ones might emerge. Enemies learn new tricks while new tactics might be developed that make the old ones worthless. Given enough time, the actual climate and terrain might even change. When that grows dull, it is simply time to launch a campaign with yet another new generation!

A particularly novel twist on this scenario is to have the organization the PCs founded become corrupt or ineffective over the years. The new PCs are faced with a dilemma: reform the organization or destroy it. Things become even more interesting if the founders left some kind of protective magic or tactics in place, as the players must figure out a way to beat their earlier handiwork!

The Mercenary's Life

Of all the investments a group of adventurers can pursue, the most natural one is to combine their newly won capital with their unique combat abilities to form a professional mercenary unit. Instead of being the actual fighting unit, the PCs become leaders of a much larger group, trying to carry their success in battle to a grander scale. In pursuing this course, an entirely new world of rewards and dangers presents itself.

The first step, of course, is to acquire a body of mercenaries to command. Perhaps a veteran commander of a mercenary band has his eye on retirement and is willing to cede his command to a worthy successor—for a price. Maybe a garrison on the frontier of a decaying empire could be convinced to change allegiance in exchange for a steady income. A band of desperate but honest men forced into a life of banditry would probably jump at the chance to reform and begin life anew as honest soldiers.

If Fortune is not smiling broadly on the PCs, they might be forced to recruit a unit from scratch. Making the rounds at taverns and hiring a crier to announce the vacancies is the most straightforward technique. To find better recruits, however, one must be more selective. Veterans of military service might spread the word among their old garrison buddies. Families of PCs and new recruits should be canvassed for younger sons who have not yet been apprenticed. If any of the PCs were born into nomadic or barbarian tribes, their

PC Organization

The PCs decide they want to found a military academy for the royal army. In addition to training cadets to become officers, they must build a detailed map library and have magical laboratories to develop new combat spells. Occasionally, the PCs travel to distant lands to serve as observers in foreign wars, trying to pick up new tactics (although doing so requires diplomatic credentials to avoid charges of spying).

The DM decides that the War College requires the following: facilities capable of housing 100 cadets (basically a small manor for 50,000 gp), 20 seasoned officers serving as instructors (20 gp/month each), 5 clerks to maintain and enhance the library (8 gp/month each), and a fully stocked magical workshop (10,000 gp). There is also a 5 gp a month "salary" (actually, room and board) for each of the 100 cadets. No room or board modifiers apply to the salaries (although cadets live at the academy, they are exempt from the modifier), so the monthly total salary is 940 gp. Adding in a 1% maintenance cost on the property gives 1,440 gp/month. The total startup cost is 940 gp + 50,000 gp + 10,000 gp = 60,940 gp.

Since a government-run military academy would not charge cadets tuition, the place doesn't generate income of its own but must instead be entirely dependent on money from government patrons. The DM decides that the first and foremost patron of the academy is the Queen. (It's her army, after all.) Also, the PCs must convince the Minister of War (to acquire the cadets and instructors), the Treasurer (for the money to run the place), and the Foreign Minister (for diplomatic credentials) of the value of their academy. Every month, the DM should roll 1d6 and consult the "income" entry for a PC institution on the table. A "budget shortfall" result would represent the Queen or a minister targeting the academy for budget cuts or closure (1–10% × 1,440 gp = 14–140 gp shortfall). In that case, the PCs must roleplay an encounter with the skeptical official to try to restore funding.

Mercenary Unit

In their travels, the PCs have become the first from their homeland to encounter elephants. The players decide that, properly armored, these beasts could serve as an unstoppable cavalry unit, one that could command a high price. At great expense, they bring twelve war elephants back with them (500 gp × 2 (to transport them) × 12 = 12,000 gp), along with a veteran elephant cavalry officer (50 gp/month) to help train the new troops.

The DM decides that tack, harness, and barding cost ten times that of a horse because it is so big and must be custom made. The PCs commission leather barding for each elephant (150 gp × 10 × 12 = 18,000 gp) and a howdah (riding platform, treated as a saddle for cost purposes) for the driver and two crossbowmen (10 gp × 10 × 12 = 1,200gp). A month of salary must also be used to sign up 4 grooms, 12 heavy cavalrymen, 24 mounted archers, and the imported officer [(4 × 1 gp) + (12 × 10 gp) + (24 × 4 gp) + 50 gp = 270 gp]. The DM rules that it will take an entire month of intense training, however, before the troops are accustomed to these strange new beasts (another 270 gp). When all this is figured, the total startup cost is 19,740 gp plus the cost of the elephants, or 31,740 gp.

For recurring costs, the DM figures that it costs ten times as much to care and feed for an elephant than a horse (10 × 5 sp/day × 30 days/month × 12 elephants = 1,800 gp/month). Added to the salaries (270 gp), it will cost a total of 2,070 gp/month to run the unit.

Fortunately for the PCs, the elephant cavalry is as fearsome as they had hoped. If the PCs start using *bless*, *protection from normal missiles*, or other spells (and the DM lets them), the force is practically unstoppable. It would not be the least bit surprising for a savvy negotiator to get 40 or 50% above the units expenses (perhaps 3,100 gp/month) from an employer. Of course, a price tag that high might also lead to the unit being the first to be released once a campaign is over. It would be unlikely that a unit this expensive would be kept on the payroll for garrison duty between wars.

clans might provide one of the unit's best sources of bloodthirsty talent.

Once the PCs have assembled a body of soldiers, money must be spent to equip and prepare them. Raw recruits must be outfitted from scratch, while even seasoned veterans require at least some new gear—a new pair of boots, replacement of a battered helm, a deloused bedroll, and other necessities. Additionally, any mercenary worth his or her salt will demand money up front, a "signing bonus" as it were. This is represented by the "one month salary up front" startup cost.

For recurring expenses, the PCs must shell out much more than just the soldiers' salaries. The cost of support personnel (blacksmiths, armorers, cooks, porters, and other skilled professionals) must be handled. Furthermore, the supplies and housing for a unit must be addressed. Specifically, troop salaries in the *Dungeon Master Guide* do not include food or housing. (The table assumes that such troops are being fed with food grown on the lord's lands and are housed in his keep.) For a mercenary unit, the "pay for housing" and "pay for food" salary modifiers in the table might apply, especially if the troops are on the march. This additional cost reflects not only basic room and board but also the need for expensive equipment (such as the caring for a cavalry squadron's mounts) and the better quarters and meals accorded to veteran units with more prestige and experience. A unit's commander might consider spending money above and beyond the unit's basic needs, as better housing and food are a cheap way to keep morale high.

The final recurring cost of running a mercenary unit is paid not in coins but in people. A mercenary unit is constantly losing members to injuries, illness, retirement, desertion, and recruiting by other militiary units. As a result, the PCs must constantly seek new talent, probably using the techniques described earlier. In addition, veterans might seek out the unit as it grows in fame and prestige. Finally, a bold (foolhardy?) leader might try to "steal" away talent from other mercenary units. Doing so, however, risks at least retaliatory recruiting efforts or, at most, a violent confrontation.

Now that the costs have been examined, the most important issue of being a mercenary must be addressed: getting paid. A mercenary unit is usually either hired for a specified campaign or for an indefinite period as garrison troops (in which case, food and housing are traditionally provided). The hiring price is decided in advance in a "job interview" between the PC representative and the person doing the hiring. This should be a fully developed NPC, with a demeanor appropriate for his or her position (for example, an experienced warlord accustomed to dealing with mercenaries, a snobbish noble who holds them in contempt, a desperate village council seeking to defend their homes from raiders, and so forth). The "interview" should be roleplayed as part of a regular gaming session, with the PCs' ability to bargain having a strong influence on the final price the client will pay. Usually, a figure of 25% above the unit's expenses is not unreasonable, although it will be higher or lower if there are extenuating circumstances (say, 10% if rival units are competing for the contract or no excess at all if the unit is allowed to keep plunder during a campaign).

With the economic issues addressed, let's examine a sample mercenary unit in the sidebar.

Of course, the benefits for the PCs mean nothing unless the players also win by having a more intriguing, more interesting game. Perhaps the most compelling reason to turn mercenary is to allow your gaming group to transition to mass combat, miniature-style gaming systems like the BATTLESYSTEM® rules or the mass combat rules in the *Player's Handbook*. Trying out these systems in this manner allows for variety without having to build a whole campaign world from scratch. What's nice about choosing this approach is that it allows the gaming circle to mix and match systems as they wish. They can transition entirely to the other systems, mix miniatures and roleplay, or even go back entirely to the original RPG if they find the experiment unfulfilling.

As a final note, it should be pointed out that the term "mercenaries" is not synonymous with "warriors." Mages offer both supplemental firepower and magical intelligence gathering capabilities. Rogues make good scouts, but even better spies. Druids and rangers are ideal trackers. Clerics not only have healing abilities to offer but also can improve a unit's morale and efficiency with *bless* and other magics. Finally, it is entirely possible to build an entire unit out of

non-warrior classes. A dozen mages and apprentices make a formidable artillery battery. A batch of rogues can serve as a spy and sabotage network. A band of clerics can run a field hospital capable of defending itself in a pinch.

After playing at the mercenary game for a while, the players might never go back to regular adventuring.

Miscellaneous Ways To Part Adventurers and Their Money

Naturally, there are many other investment opportunities that a creative DM can present to the players. Some are simply variants of the items presented earlier. Trapping expeditions and "monster safaris" are really just other forms of a merchant caravan. Investing in a weaponsmith's shop or a casino has a great deal in common with running an inn or tavern. Becoming a privateer against your country's enemies is about the same as becoming a seagoing mercenary with a good cause.

Other possibilities are not so straightforward. Owning and operating a mine is a complex undertaking. The same can be said for running any other "industrial" concern, such as a foundry, quarry, glassworks, or shipyard. Owners must deal with shortages of tools, raw materials, and skilled labor. There are likely to be logistical issues to make sure that goods get to customers on time and in the right quantities. And finally, there are always neighbors, government officials, and trade guilds to placate, confront, or endure.

There also exist more intangible investments. It is always possible for a wealthy individual to purchase a title of nobility. This enhances social standing and can open up new adventures centering around court intrigue and scandal. If names and titles mean little to the PCs, they can still spread their wealth among any powerful but cash-strapped members of the gentry. In making such polite, discreet loans, they can learn just how easy it is to buy influence. A variant of this is tithing a good amount of your wealth to a major religion, thus ingratiating yourself with the church leaders. At the DM's discretion, large offerings might even foster goodwill with the deity in question. After all, doesn't it make sense that a patron god of commerce should take bribes in the form of offerings?

Naturally, there exist an infinite number of other investment schemes, limited only by the players' and DM's imaginations.

Conclusions

No discussion of money in a fantasy role-playing game would be complete without a discussion of the problems inherent to having, and keeping, such a large sum of gold. Wherever wealth is concentrated, so too will be an army of swindlers, hustlers, and other ne'er-do-wells intent on separating the PCs and their money. Wealth makes the characters instant targets, and the players should keep this in mind. If a "merchant" wants to sell you some goods, ask around to see whether he has reputation for honest dealing. When offered a handful of gems as payment on a shipment, have an expert check to make sure they aren't just cut glass. Stash your fortune in a bank so you won't have to worry about burglars. And never flaunt your wealth, especially around strangers. If the PCs fail to take these and other basic precautions, the DM might consider planning a little object lesson in the form of a smooth-talking con artist or band of back alley bandits. The players won't make the same mistake twice, one hopes.

Wherever wealth is concentrated, so too will be an army of swindlers, hustlers, and other ne'er-do-wells.

Of course, an even worse fate might befall the campaign—more dangerous than financial ruin, more disastrous than the dishonor of all the PCs, more tragic even than the death of all the characters and the destruction of their world. The game might grow dull.

The best way to handle this is to delegate the boring, mundane tasks to a trusted NPC. Hire an experienced bartender to run the tavern. Put a promising lieutenant in charge of the mercenary unit's payroll and equipment. Sign on an experienced caravan master to keep an eye on the animal handlers and dicker when the time comes to buy and sell. Letting these experts do what they do best frees up the PCs to do what they do best: adventuring.

If this strategy doesn't work, more drastic action is required and the investment must be scuttled. A local noble could buy out the PCs' interest in their mercenary unit to flesh out his own force. The academy the PCs founded might start to thrive on its own, the board of regents taking the decision-making chores out of the characters' hands. Heck, if worse comes to worst, the DM can simply have a favorite band of villains burn down the PCs' tavern or sink their merchant ship!

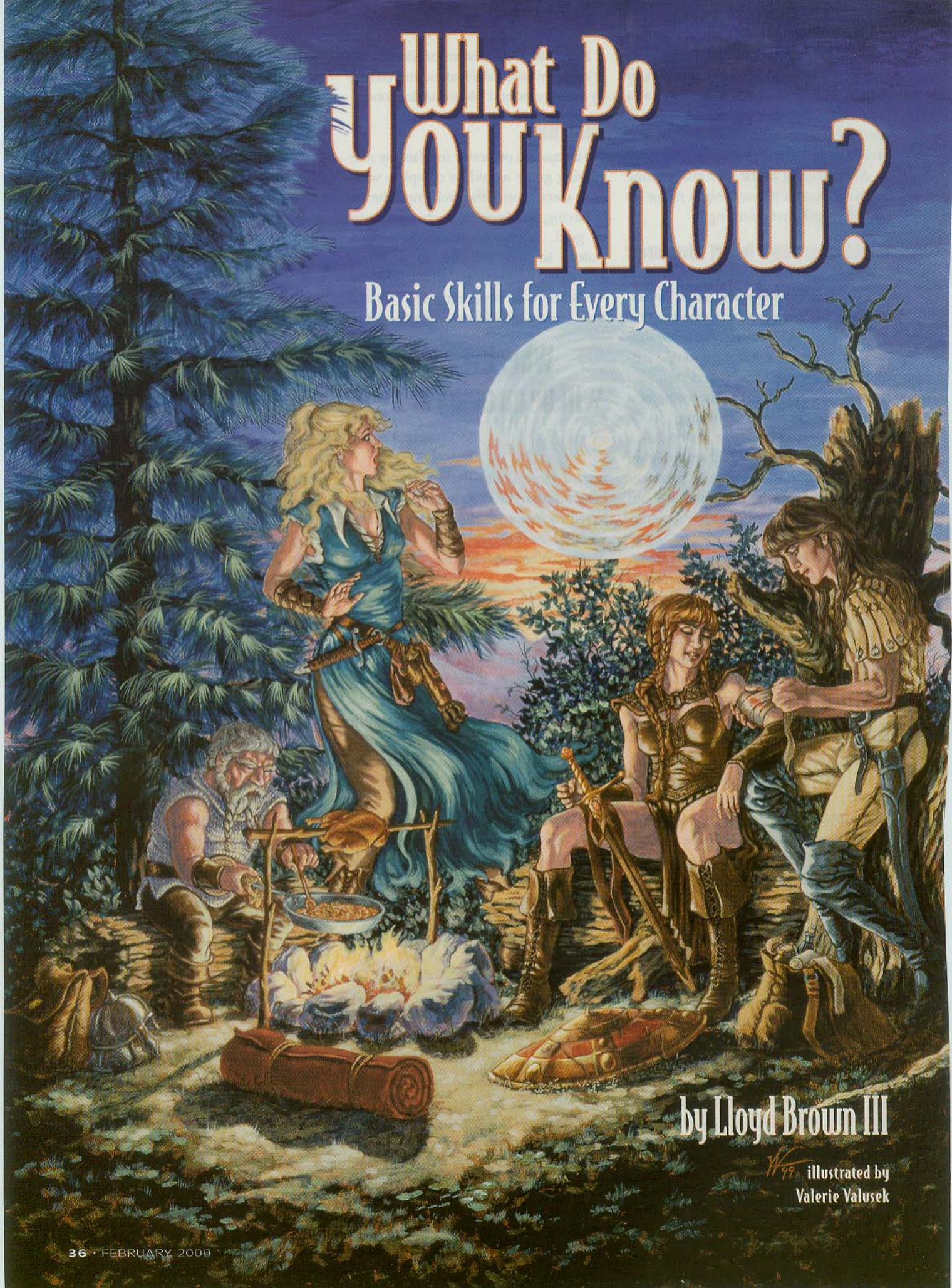
In any case, the DM must remain constantly vigilant, making sure that the investment the PCs made enhances the campaign rather than detracts from it. The scenarios presented in this article are merely ways of spicing up an ongoing game, not ends in and of themselves. If these strategies fail in their purpose, which is to make the game more interesting or exciting, the DM must take action. He or she should not be the least bit shy about sacrificing the PCs' investment if that's what it takes to make the game fun again.

After all, it's only money.

Kevin Haw lives in Southern California with his wife. His personal investments include his company pension plan, his 401K, and a large saphire swiped from the lair of a minotaur.

What Do You Know?

Basic Skills for Every Character



by Lloyd Brown III

illustrated by Valerie Valusek

An AD&D® character sheet devotes ample space to combat and spellcasting, as these abilities are often the most exciting aspects of adventuring. Outside of such glamorous situations, players and DMs are sometimes at a loss to know what their characters can do. Here to solve that problem is a list of basic skills that all characters have.

With the following rules reference and expansion, players with nonproficient characters attempting common feats like swimming and climbing know their chances.

Senses

Hear Noise. Most PC races (dwarves, humans, and half-elves) have a 15% chance to hear a subdued or distant noise (*DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*, Chapter 15). Elves and halflings have superior hearing (20% chance), and gnomes have the best ears, with a 25% chance to hear noise. Note that this progression corresponds directly with the racial bonuses to a thief's Detect Noise ability given in Chapter 3 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Spot Hidden Object. Most races have a base 15% chance to notice hidden objects. This chance approximates the one-in-six chance most characters have to spot secret doors (16⅔%). Elves must have keen eyesight, as evidenced by their enhanced ability to spot secret and concealed doors, so they deserve a higher chance (25%). Half-elves, lacking the full abilities of their more observant parent, should be in between—20%. Dwarves and gnomes might gain a bonus in an underground setting, if the DM allows—an extra 5%–10%. DMs should apply situational modifiers as appropriate.

The ability to spot objects does not affect a rogue's Pick Pockets or Hide in Shadows ability. It comes into play when characters are searching a crime scene for clues, looking for a particular item in a large group, or possibly watching for pursuers in a crowd.

In the last application, the Trailing proficiency from *The Complete Thief's Handbook* should come into play if the character has that nonweapon proficiency. Otherwise, the character should have the reduced chance reflected by the universal ability to spot hidden objects. The DM might rule that the chance is modified by the skill of the pursuers, size of the pursuers, or business of the street.

Detection of Invisibility. Any time a character has a reason to believe that an invisible creature is nearby, he or she can make a saving throw vs. spell. The character must have a reason to believe that an invisible creature is in the area; this check cannot be made routinely whenever the character camps for the night (although if the character has been attacked by invisible creatures on multiple occasions, the circumstances might allow it for a week or two or until the character eliminates the enemy or leaves the area). If the saving throw is successful, the character "detects some small sign of the invisible foe's presence" (*DUNGEON MASTER Guide*, Chapter 13). Since the target is still invisible, it cannot be targeted by sight-aimed spells such as *magic missiles*, and attacks against it are made at a –4 penalty.

Detection of Scrying. Any character with an Intelligence (or Intelligence/Reason) of 12 or higher has a chance to notice that he or she is the subject of scrying. The base chance is determined by class. See **Table 1.**

To this base, add bonuses based on level and Intelligence. See **Table 2.** A 6th-level paladin with a 14 Intelligence, for example, has a base 6%, plus 21% (for level), and 3% (for Intelligence) for a total 30% chance to notice whether she is being scried on by a spell or magical item. This ability does not reveal common Divination spells like *detect evil* or *detect lie*. It functions only for scrying from a distance, as with the spell *magic mirror* or a *crystal ball*.

Table 1: Base Chance To Detect Scrying

Class	Base Chance
Fighter	2%
Paladin	6%
Ranger	4%
Bard	3%
Thief	6%
Wizard or Priest	8%

Table 2: Scrying Detection Bonuses

Level	Intelligence	Bonus
1	13	1%
2	14	3%
3	15	6%
4	16	10%
5	17	15%
6	18	21%
7	19	28%
8	20	35%
9	21	43%
10	22	54%
11	23	64%
12	24	75%
13	25	87%
14	25	100%

Proficiencies

Cooking. Any character can spit a piece of meat and hang it over a fire. Nonproficient characters do not know how to dress game animals to save the most meat or how to prepare elaborate dishes. Common foods most characters can prepare are stews, roasted meat, and bread.

Jumping. All uninjured characters can jump. When distance is critical, the character with the Jumping proficiency uses the rules for that proficiency to determine jumping distance. Other characters use the following formulas:

A character can make a running jump if he or she has at least 20 feet in a straight line clear before the jumping point. Nonproficient size-M characters can jump 2d6 feet. At the DM's option, a character's attack bonus for Strength (Strength/Muscle) *or* Dexterity (Dexterity/Balance) can be added to the distance jumped. When performing a running jump, the character can elect to end the jump prone and add 1d2 feet to the jump. If enemies are on the other side of the obstacle the character is leaping

over, they attack with the normal bonuses for attacking a prone target.

From a standing position (or with insufficient running room), jumping distances are halved. The character cannot add to the length of his jump by landing in a prone position.

When attempting a high jump, a nonproficient character can leap vertically 1d3 feet from a running start. From a standing position, the same character can still jump 1d2 feet into the air modified by the DM for Strength. The standing character could also leap 1d2 feet backward. A misguided character gains no bonuses for running backward prior to leaping in that direction and might make matters worse by falling to the ground (successful Dexterity check or fall) just before reaching the desired jumping point.

Jumping is a function of skill and speed. Penalties applied to a character's movement due to fatigue, encumbrance, *slow* spell, and other factors also apply to jumping. A character reduced to half his normal movement due to heavy gear jumps only half as far as normal.

In jumping situation, size S characters (gnomes and halflings) reduce jumping distances by one quarter.

A nonproficient jumper using a pole is likely to be hurt. If he or she wants to try, however, a character with a pole needs at least a 30' running start and firm footing to set the pole when jumping. If a pole is used, it must be 4 feet to 10 feet longer than the character's height. The horizontal and vertical distance cleared is equal to the length of the pole. A nonproficient character using a pole cannot elect to land on his feet. A Dexterity check at a –2 penalty is necessary; failure indicates that the character did not have enough momentum to move over the halfway point of the jump, and he or she falls backward the length of the pole.

Size S characters using a pole find that they perform equally well, but their pole must be shorter—from 2 to 6 feet longer than the character's height.

Groups using PLAYER'S OPTION® rules find that the Jumping proficiency is drastically changed. Distances over a base length require a proficiency check with increasing penalties. DMs can use the above system for nonproficient jumpers or use the rules described in *Skills & Powers* (page 100), allowing no chance for nonproficient characters to improve on base jumping distances. Base distances are 20 feet for a running jump, 8 feet for a standing jump, 4 feet for a high jump, and 3 feet for a standing high jump.

Riding. Any character may sit on a horse and convince it to move more or less in the general direction desired. In combat, however, the horse becomes more difficult to control. Any rider on the back of an untrained horse suffers a –2 penalty to all attack rolls due to the wild movement of the horse. Nonproficient characters also suffer a –2 penalty to any saving throws for the same reason.

If a mount is exposed to large open flame (a *fireball* or *pyrotechnics* spell, house fire), or the horse and rider enter combat, an untrained horse spooks and panics 90% of the time, checked at the beginning of combat or when the horse is first exposed to the fire. If the horse panics, the nonproficient rider automatically loses control, and the horse flees the perceived threat for 1d4 rounds, moving at one and a half times normal maximum movement. Warhorses panic in the presence of fire or loud noise only 10% of the time. The DM might rule that special animals such as a paladin's warhorse or *charmed* animals do not panic in these circumstances.

Even without the proficiency, your character can *try* cooking, riding, or singing.

A nonproficient character on a warhorse can still benefit from the animal's natural attacks, but the character suffers combat penalties as if on an untrained horse, since he or she cannot synchronize his movements to those of the horse as well as a proficient rider. The character does gain the benefits of attacking a smaller target (+1 to attack rolls) or doubling lance damage during a charge if the condition applies.

A nonproficient rider on the back of a horse cannot use any missile weapons if the mount is moving. If the horse stands still, the rider can fire normally, but he or she can still use appropriate weapons only (shortbows, composite shortbows, light crossbows, and longbows in the hands of a specialized character). The character may fire a loaded and cocked heavy crossbow but cannot ready the weapon from the back of the horse.

Singing. Any character with a voice can sing. Some sing better than others. Nonproficient characters cannot read sheet music and are unfamiliar with musical terminology. They can sing along with a group, can learn songs if they apply themselves over time, and know popular songs. They are unlikely to know historical lays, extensive legends of people and places, or songs from other cultures or races. Common tunes include children's songs, repetitive chants to make the workday go faster, and religious hymns.

Swimming. Nonproficient characters who find themselves in the water are advised to get out of the water as soon as possible. If unencumbered, they may stay afloat for long periods of time. Nonproficient characters can stay afloat for a number of hours equal to their Constitution scores. After that, however, they make Constitution checks for each half hour instead of each hour, and their effective Constitution is reduced by one point at each half-hour interval. Recovery of lost Constitution is the same for proficient or nonproficient characters.

Moving is taxing for a nonproficient character. The character's movement is 1, and movement can be sustained as staying afloat, except that the time is measured in turns rather than hours.

Encumbered, nonproficient characters do little other than sink. Lightly encumbered characters reduce their effective Constitution by ⅓, rounding fractions down. Moderate encumbrance reduces effective Constitution by ½, heavy reduces it by ⅔, and severely encumbered nonproficient swimmers begin to sink to the bottom after 1 round. (*Player's Handbook*, Chapter 14)

Combat

Options. Characters know which options are available to them during a combat, but they might not select the best one at any given time. To help

novice players, DMs might wish to prepare short written lists of options available to the players, customized for their particular character. The list might include options such as attack, cast spell, parry, move, turn undead, and others. If the player seems particularly inventive or picks up well from the examples of others, this aid might not be necessary.

Generally, nonplayer characters attack until they fail a Morale check, and then they attempt to escape or surrender, as the situation warrants. Warriors and all higher-level characters are more likely to consider other options, such as disarming foes, making called shots, or using other moves as appropriate.

If a player seems to forget something potentially dangerous (like the free back attack the enemy gains if the character turns and runs), the DM should remind the player unless special situations rule otherwise (such as the character being affected by a *fear* spell and having no choice). If the modifier in question is slight (+1 for attacking from higher ground, for example), the DM can roll a d20 and remind the player of the modifier if the result is lower than the character's level. The DM can treat warriors as two levels higher and militant priests as one level higher if desired.

Punching/Pummeling. All characters are assumed to be proficient in pummeling and wrestling. Proficient characters make normal attacks as defined in the *Player's Handbook*. If a character wishes to be nonproficient in pummeling, he or she gains no advantages in the core rules. With the PLAYER'S OPTION rules, however, the character gains 3 character points (CP). The character should state a good reason why his character never learned the basics of bare-hand fighting. Nonproficient pummelers in either system attack with the nonproficiency penalty for their class. With the PLAYER'S OPTION rules, warriors may make multiple attacks at higher levels.

Wrestling/Grappling. Wrestling skills achieve different results than pummeling skills, but they are learned the same way. All characters are assumed to be proficient wrestlers, but a character using PLAYER'S OPTION rules may be nonproficient for a gain of 3 CPs if he or she can justify the lack of skill with a reasonable background. As with pummeling, nonproficient characters make wrestling attacks with the nonproficiency penalty defined by their class, although high-level warriors enjoy multiple attacks, as described in *PLAYER'S OPTION: Combat & Tactics*.

Weapon Use. In the AD&D game, each weapon is assumed to require a specific skill, and skills do not carry over to other weapons. Each character, however, has one or more styles of fighting with which to use these weapons. These are sword and shield, two-hander, two-weapon, and single-weapon. These styles are fully described in *The Complete Fighter's Handbook* (beginning page 61). Characters cannot learn a style not allowed to their class but may become more skilled in a style by spending weapon proficiencies.

* **Priests can use sword and shield, two-hander, and single-weapon styles.**
* **Wizards can use single-weapon and two-hander weapon styles.**
* **Rogues can use single-weapon, two-hander, and two-weapon styles.**
* **Warriors can use any of the four styles.**

Sticks and Stones. Similar to the reasoning behind universal proficiency with punching and wrestling, DMs might allow all characters to attack with a club or thrown rock without paying the nonproficiency penalty. These weapons would not include specially made clubs, such as the war club or great club from *PLAYER'S OPTION: Combat & Tactics*, but would only include natural or quickly-made weapons. The odd shape of the available material, however, might impose a penalty on the attack roll, if the character is (for example) swinging a stalactite at an ogre. The character should still gain multiple attacks for Strength bonuses, high level, and any situational bonuses.

Groups using PLAYER'S OPTION rules could add 2 CPs to characters unskilled with common clubs and stones if these skills are declared universal. Normal class modifiers still apply to their use. (Some priestly faiths might not allow wooden or stone weapons, or any missile weapons.) This option extends the weapon-using capability of wizards slightly; this aspect should be considered by DMs when deciding on whether to use it.

First Aid. Any character with bandage material available can bind another's wounds to prevent death if the character is at "death's door." (see the optional rules in Chapter 9 of the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*). If the unconscious character suffers from a critical hit and is losing hit points from bleeding, these wounds can also be bound by a nonproficient character. Binding wounds takes only 1 round and can be performed in the midst of combat, although the binding character is considered to be sitting/kneeling as far as attackers are concerned. (Melee attacks are made at +2 on the attack roll, but missile attacks suffer a –1 penalty, as per *Combat &Tactics*, page 30.)

Only characters with the healing proficiency can bind wounds without material for bandages, subject to the decision of the DM.

Knowledge/Other

Climbing. Characters have a base chance of climbing of 40%. Nonproficient characters must take the penalty to this chance based on race (from Table 27 in the *Player's Handbook*), armor (from Table 29: Thieving Skill Armor Adjustments in the *Player's Handbook*, the expanded table in *The Complete Thief's Handbook* [Table 38: Effects of Armor on Thief Skills, page 115] or Table 66: Climbing Modifiers in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*) if the penalty applies. Nonproficient climbers (the appropriate proficiency is Mountaineering) can not scale any surfaces categorized as very smooth, smooth, and rough.

Nonproficient climbers gain no benefits for not wearing armor. Characters with the Mountaineering proficiency may gain racial or armor bonuses if applicable.

DMs might wish to allow a Climbing proficiency, which allows characters to increase their chance to climb walls, but does not include the use of tools. The proficiency would be appropriate for characters living in flatlands, marshes, small islands, or other places where no mountains are available for practice. The character could develop his skill by climbing trees, buildings, and possibly small underground caves.

The Climbing proficiency adds 10% to the character's chance to climb walls per slot devoted to it. Climbing belongs to the General list, requires only one slot, and has no relevant ability. If using the PLAYER'S OPTION rules, Climbing costs 3 CPs, and the relevant ability is Strength/Stamina.

Native Language. Any character can speak his native language. Characters of low Intelligence have a limited vocabulary and poor grammar, but they can generally make themselves understood. Characters of higher intelligence both understand more and are themselves easier to understand in their speech and writing.

Other Languages. Characters might recognize the sounds of other languages spoken in their native area, depending on their background. The DM should have a list of languages available to beginning characters to choose from when selecting initial proficiencies, based on the area's makeup and cultures. Characters recognize these languages 75% of the time when heard or 25% of the time when seen in print. If the character is proficient in Reading/Writing, he or she can recognize the written form of other languages used nearby slightly more often—40% of the time.

Reading/Writing. All characters recognize the written form of any language they speak, even if they cannot read or write. In some game worlds or time periods, the ability to read and write a language is assumed with the knowledge of that spoken language. For most, reading and writing are not assumed, and characters must spend a proficiency slot or CP to become literate. Generally speaking, even illiterate characters often know how to sign their own names and recognize them when they see them.

Religion. All characters know the names of all greater and intermediate powers worshiped in the area. They can associate titles or spheres of control with those powers about half the time. Characters know the basic tenets and restrictions of their own professed faith. Characters are familiar with common titles of clerics or specialty priests of their own faith. They know official holy days and vague references to the origin of those celebrations.

Math. Historically, complex mathematics were known to highly advanced cultures such as the Chinese as far back as 3,000 years ago. Europe, on the other hand, didn't even use a full decimal system until the Arabs introduced the use of the "0" as a cipher just before the end of the first millennium. The common European could add and subtract small numbers; a more intelligent person could perform basic mathematical functions more quickly. The extent of common knowledge depends on the individual character's background, but as a general rule, most characters should be able to perform basic mathematical skills. Algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus should be unknown.

Magic. Characters know that the magic of priests and wizards differs, although they do not know the details of the differences. They know that spellcasters generally cannot cast spells if silenced and bound. They know the importance of material components or holy symbols. They know that a wizard needs his spellbook to learn spells.

Every PC has some familiarity with religion, magic, and the campaign world.

Common characters know the names of 1d4 schools or spheres of magic, but they don't know the details, restrictions, or opposition schools. Certain characters (followers of priests, apprentice or failed wizards, or royalty) know more about magic as it relates to their field of interest. A priest's followers, for example, know the priest's major spheres of access. An apprentice wizard can proudly quote all of the schools of wizardly magic and recite their definitions.

Campaign Knowledge. Characters should know something of the major politics in the region where the campaign begins. They know the form of government, titular ruler (they might not know who actually rules), most prominent religion, and possibly other powers in the area (guilds, merchant houses, secret societies, and others). The most popular trade goods or services are known to all characters as well.

Characters should know which monsters and animals are commonly encountered in the area. They should be able to identify most of these creatures on sight from previous descriptions by their parents, friends, and neighbors. Normal animals might be known 100% of the time, adjusted down for particularly urban characters who never set foot outside of the city walls. Common monsters (orcs, stirges, or zombies) might be recognized 80% of the time. Uncommon or rare monsters that have a readily identifiable shape (a griffin or a unicorn) might also be recognized often. Rarer monsters, or those that need further identification (golems or slimes) probably won't be identified until the characters meet them, possibly not even then. Character history and background is the best place to turn for such knowledge.

Characters also know general attitudes. If the campaign is one of high fantasy, characters might know of a wizard in town who casts spells for a fee. If elves are considered reclusive and violent, the characters know about the bias. (Whether it's truth or rumor, they might not know.)

Characters should know the general intent of the law in their society as well. If thieves are brutally persecuted, characters should be aware of the penalties for theft or burglary. If the society is run by wealthy merchants, consumer rights might be nonexistent. Commonly encountered laws should be known to all characters.

Characters should know everyday aspects of society such as titles, the monetary system, taxes, the caste system, the calendar, the general layout of their base of operations, and current events. Whenever common knowledge is needed for play, the DM can provide the information or allow a player to make up something to fit the campaign, as long as it doesn't contradict established information or the DM's immediate plans.

Since Lloyd and 999 other monkeys started banging away on typewriters, the intelligible results are a Chinese menu, Act III, scene ii of Romeo and Juliet, *and this article.*

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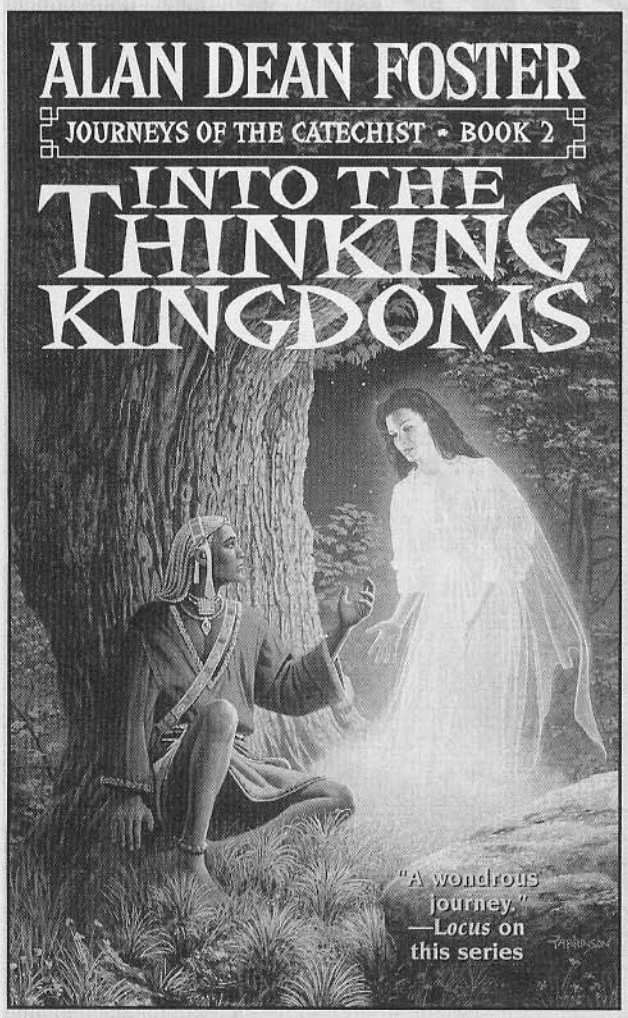

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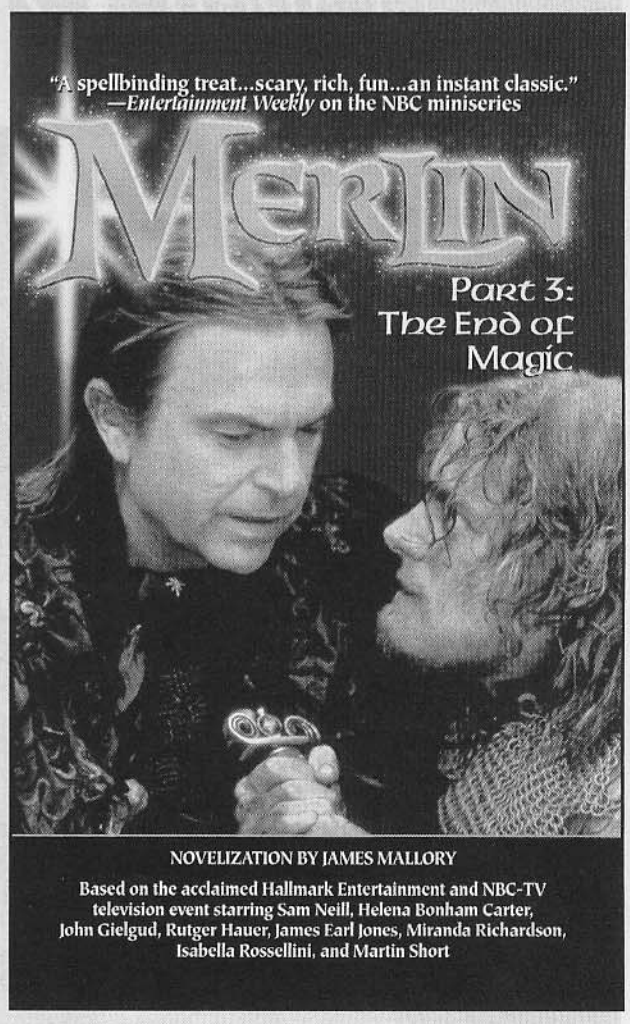
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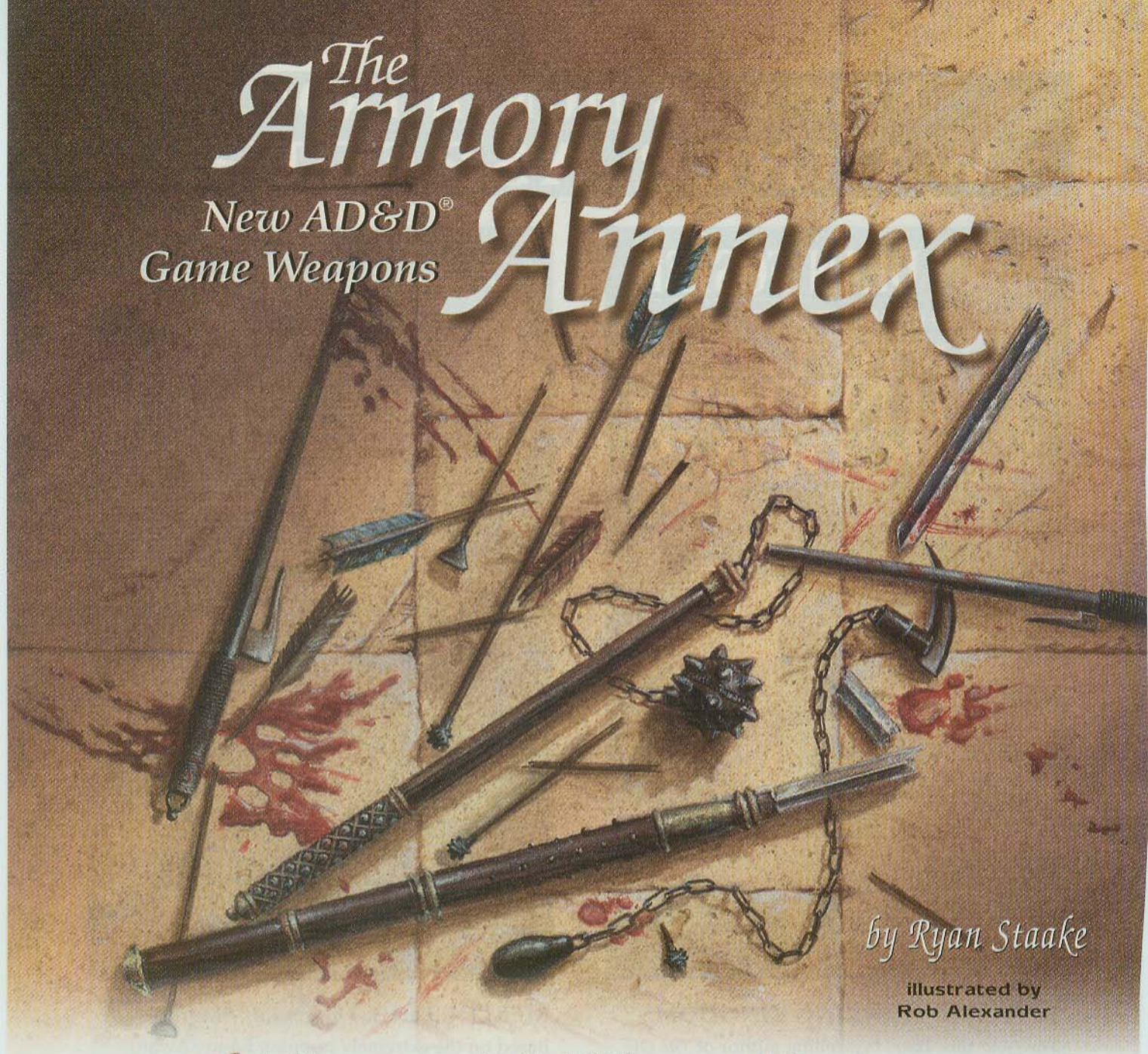
The Armory Annex

New AD&D® Game Weapons



by Ryan Staake

illustrated by Rob Alexander

Most of the weapons used in the AD&D game are based on actual historical weapons. For the most part, they are well-known implements of destruction: the sword, the spear, the dagger, and so on. Many less popular weapons, however, aren't as familiar to AD&D players, often because they were prohibitively expensive, ineffective, or simply because they developed a bad reputation.

Here is a small collection of oddities from the history of weaponry, complete with their statistics for use in the AD&D system. For more information on such ancient weapons, see **The Complete Encyclopedia of Arms and Weapons,** *edited by Leonid Tarassuk and Claude Blair (Simon and Schuster. New York, 1979).*

Ankus

Originally used in India as an elephant goad, the ankus is a polearm resembling a boat hook. It consists of a steel hook and a small spike at the tip of a 5'-long wooden pole. Though not usually intended as a weapon, it can be used as one if necessary. When a successful hit is scored against a mounted opponent, the opponent must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or be pulled from his or her mount. In addition, when used to lead an animal of size L, the wielder receives a +2 bonus to Animal Handling proficiency checks.

New Weapons

	Cost	Weight (lbs.)	Size	Type	Speed Factor	Damage S/M	Damage L
Ankus	7 gp	8	L	P/S	9	1d6	1d4
Arrow, battering	1 sp	1/10	S	B	—	1d6	1d6
Arrow, trapezoid	1 sp	1/10	S	P	—	1d8	1d8
Bolt, battering	4 sp	1/10	S	B	—	1d4	1d6
Bolt, trapezoid	4 sp	1/10	S	P	—	1d4+1	1d6+1
Brandistock	35 gp	4	M	S	5	1d6	1d8
Cestrosphendone	1 gp	2	S	P	5	1d4	1d3
Chakram	10 sp	1/2	S	S	3	1d4	1d3
Feruzue	35 gp	4	M	B	7	1d6	1d8
Francisca	3 gp	6	M	S	5	1d6+1	1d6
Jitte	7 gp	3	M	B	3	1d4+1	1d6+1
Kuda-yari	25 gp	3	M	P	4	1d6	1d8
Nagegama	10 gp	5	M	P	8	1d6	1d6
Navaja, short	10 gp	1	S	P	3	1d4	1d3
Navaja, long	25 gp	3	M	P	4	1d6	1d8
Sword stick	varies	varies	varies	B	4	1d4*	1d3*

* In a pinch, the sword stick can be wielded as a cane or light quarterstaff.

Arrow, Battering

This weapon is an ideal choice for those who wish to use a bow but are prohibited from using sharp weapons. It is a normal arrow except that its blunt tip resembles the head of a mace. The battering arrow uses the statistics for the sheaf arrow, except that it has a slightly lower damage potential. The surprise value of this weapon is its best attribute—an enemy who seems to be facing an ordinary archer will be quite surprised to discover a spellcasting cleric with a quiver full of battering arrows!

Arrow, Trapezoid

The head of this arrow is triangular or trapezoidal, with the wide end facing forward and sharpened like a blade. It is rare because of its limited practical uses, such as cutting ropes from a distance. Anyone who tries such a trick shot with this arrow does not suffer the usual –4 penalty for a called shot. The trapezoid arrow otherwise resembles a sheaf arrow, except for a lower damage potential and shorter range. (Subtract 10 yards from each range category.)

Bolt, Battering

See Arrow, Battering. This is the same weapon, designed for the crossbow.

Bolt, Trapezoid

See Arrow, Trapezoid. This is the same weapon, designed for the crossbow.

Brandistock

The brandistock appeared first in Italy in the 1300s and became widely used throughout Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. It consists of a blade concealed within a thick, hollow staff. If the staff is "brandished" in a forward direction, the blade slides out of the stick and locks into place by a catch with a spring release. This weapon, with its compact size and portability, is popular with travelers. PCs might find it useful to carry a weapon that looks harmless at first glance but is actually quite deadly. When facing an opponent who has never before seen a brandistock in action, the wielder gains a +3 bonus to initiative in the first round of combat due to the surprising transformation of the weapon.

Cestrosphendone

The cestrosphendone (from Greek words meaning "sling" and "dart") was popular in Athens between the second century B.C. and the first century A.D. It is a 15"-long dart with two straps attached to the end. The hurler grasps the straps, spinning the weapon overhead faster and faster until finally releasing it. The impetus produced by the spinning gives this weapon an impressive range for a thrown weapon (20/40/60). Learning how to spin the weapon properly and release it at the right moment is difficult. Nonproficient wielders suffer a –1 penalty to attack rolls in addition to the usual penalties for fighting with an unfamiliar weapon.

The cestrosphendone has a rate of fire of 1.

Chakram

The chakram was used mostly by the Sikhs of India and was virtually unknown outside of that nation. It is a flat steel ring, 5–12 inches in diameter, with a sharp outer edge and a rounded inner edge, its sides often elaborately engraved. It is thrown at the enemy much in the same manner that one throws a discus.

The chakram has a range of 10/25/40 and a rate of fire of 2/1.

Feruzue

This a Japanese weapon was invented in the sixteenth century. It consists of a wide, hollow staff about 3 feet long containing an iron ball attached to a chain. When the staff is brandished, the ball flies out to strike the target. The main advantage of this weapon is the surprise factor. Using the weapon as the first strike in a battle gives the wielder a +1 bonus to initiative as well as a +1 bonus to the initial attack roll. If the target is hit by this attack, he or she must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or be unable to attack that round due to shock.

The disadvantage of this weapon is the time it takes (2 rounds) to place the ball back inside the staff after the initial strike. The wielder might instead choose the option of using the weapon as an ordinary flail after the first attack. (Use statistics for a horseman's flail.)

Francisca

The francisca (or francesque) is a weapon that occupies the middle ground between the battle-ax and the throwing ax. It looks like a large butcher's knife, mounted on a handle with a sharp spike at the end. It was used by the Franks as early as 500 A.D. and later by Germanic tribes. The battle-ax was most likely a descendant of this weapon. It can be used in hand-to-hand combat and can also be thrown a limited distance (range 10/15/25).

Jitte

The jitte was a Japanese club carried by police as a truncheon and a parrying weapon. It resembles a small scimitar, except that in place of the curved blade there was a curved iron bar. In other words, this is a scimitar for those characters who cannot use edged weapons, such as clerics. It is treated as a short sword in most respects. If used to block a weapon of similar size rather than to attack, its wielder gains a –2 bonus to his or her Armor Class.

Kuda-Yari

The Japanese kuda-yari is similar to the brandistock, except that it contains a spear that locks into place instead of a blade. Otherwise, it has the same statistics and special abilities as its European cousin.

Nagegama

The nagegama (or kusarigama) was a Japanese weapon used in the defense of forts and castles. It consists of a sickle-like blade mounted on a short handle that is connected to a long chain. It is thrown down from the walls by the defenders and drawn back up to be used again. When used in this manner, an attack can be made every 3 rounds at a range of up to 20 feet. Obviously, this weapon would be unwieldy, perhaps useless, in a typical melee. If the chain were removed, however, the nagegama could be used as an ordinary sickle.

Navaja

The navaja resembles a huge pocketknife. It consists of a blade between 16 and 50 inches long that folds into a handle of equal length. It was first used in Spain in the fifteenth or sixteenth century and was considered a lower class weapon, though there are advantages to using a weapon that can be stored compactly and wielded effectively as both a melee and ranged weapon. The navaja has limited range if thrown (10/15/20 for the long blade, 10/20/30 for the short blade, and a rate of fire of 1). The statistics given for the navaja refer to a 16" blade for the short version and the 50" blade for the long.

Sword Stick

"Sword stick" is a generic term used to describe any bladed weapon concealed within a walking stick. The idea of such a concealed weapon has existed since the time of the Roman empire but became quite popular in Europe during the Renaissance.

Any weapon with a straight blade can be converted to such a weapon by increasing its cost by at least 50%. It should be noted that many areas have laws prohibiting the possession of such concealed weapons, and a character might have to deal with the black market to have such a weapon constructed. In areas with more draconian laws, the cost might be doubled or even tripled.

Ryan Staake is a technical assistant during the day, troubleshooting computer problems, and he spends just as much time on them at night,mostly playing fantasy RPGs and wargames. His involvement with AD&D goes back 14 years, but this is his first published article for DragonMagazine. Ryan enjoys tormenting his cat Panther and ranting about almost everything.

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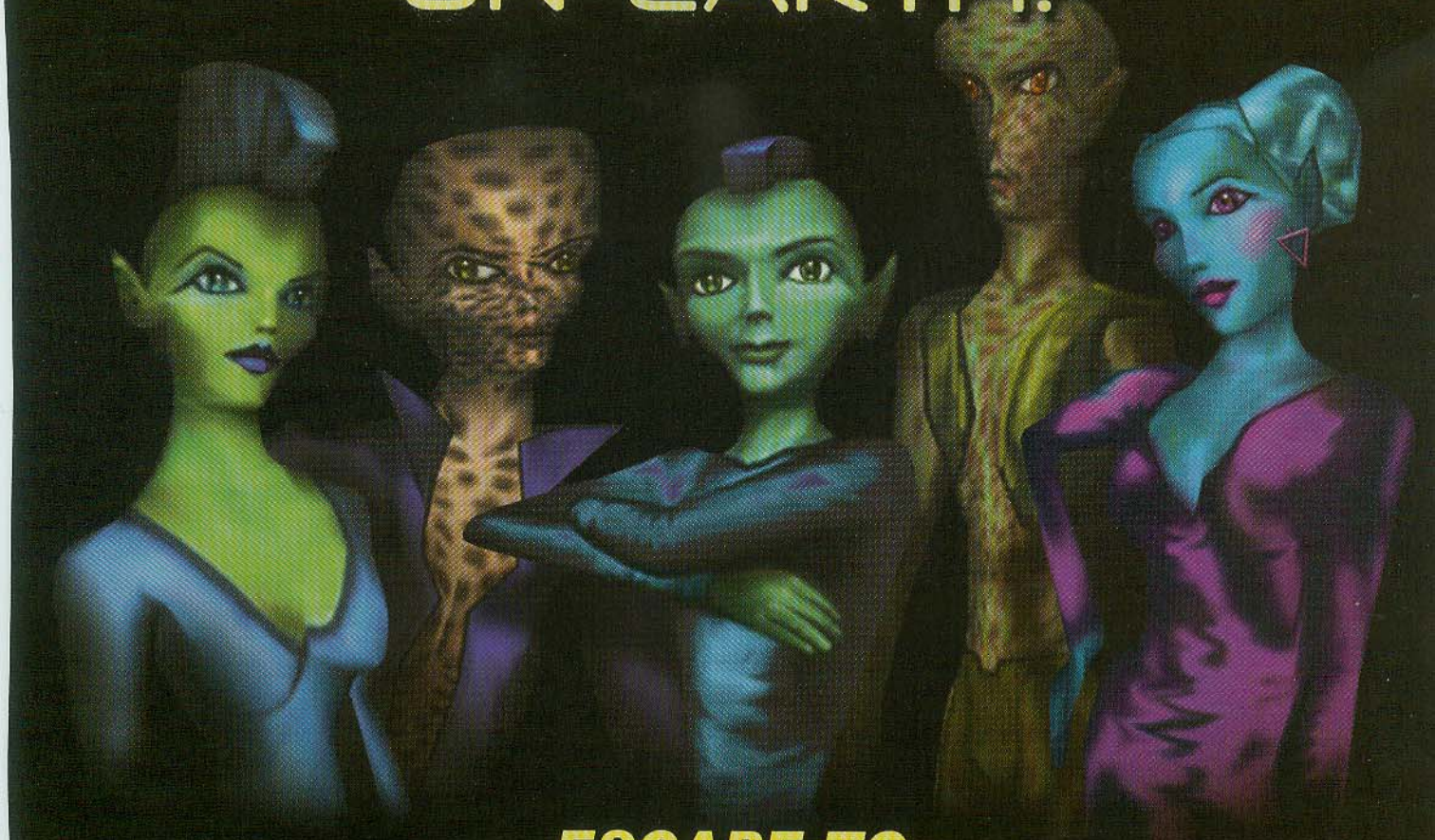

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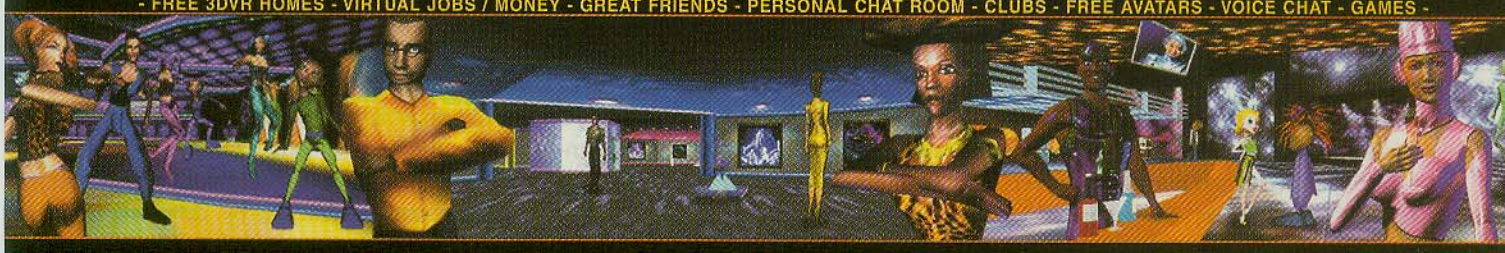

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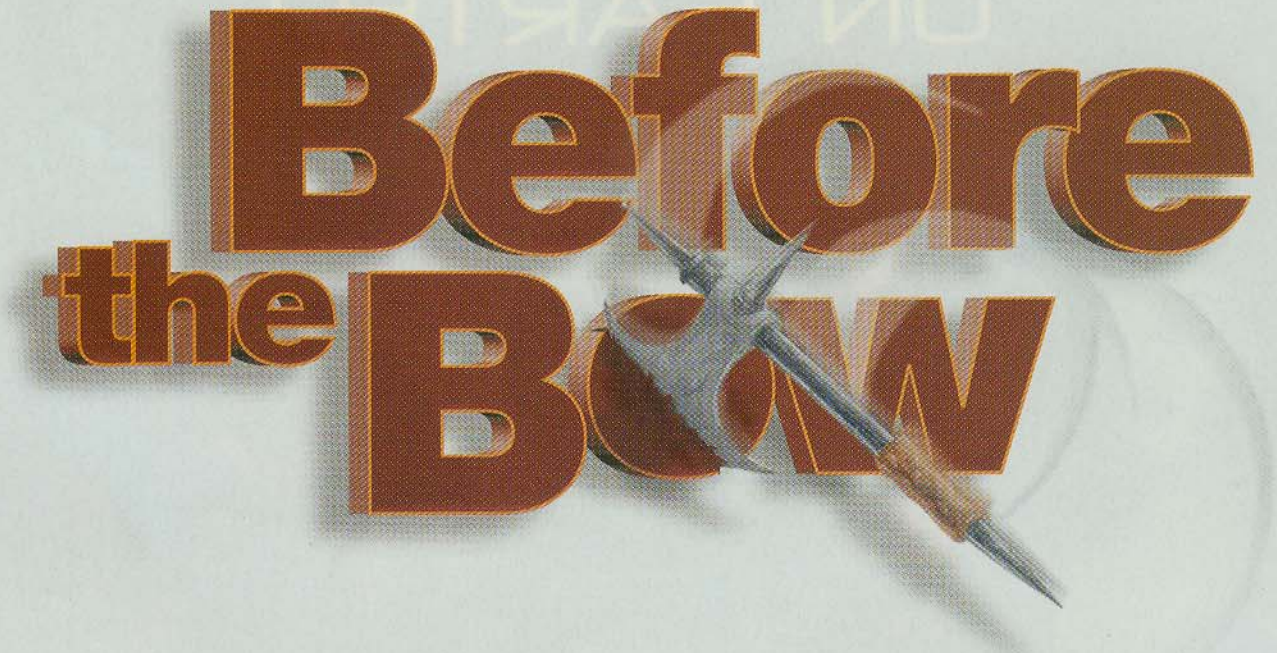


by Gregory W. Detwiler

illustrated by John Matson

When thinking of pre-gunpowder missile weapons, AD&D® game players tend to think of bows and arrows, with the crossbow as a subcategory. Yet bows are only one among many families of primitive missile weapons. Presented here are several 2nd Edition missile weapons previously covered in the 1st Edition AD&D Game (*Oriental Adventures* and *Unearthed Arcana*), the 2nd Edition AL-QADIM® supplement, and various historical references (listed in the "References" sidebar).

Hurled Melee Weapons

This category includes knives, daggers, and throwing axes like the Frankish francisca. One not covered in the AD&D game is the specialized **throwing mace**. This weapon appeared in ancient India, with battle illustrations displaying a mace with a head nearly twice the diameter of a man's fist, while the handle is so short that no part of it can be seen when someone holds it.

There are also specialized throwing sticks, such as the **boomerang**, which come in returning and nonreturning versions. Nonreturning throwing sticks known as **lipan** were used by the ancient Egyptians. These weapons resemble thick, yard-long sticks that curve like wooden scimitars. Only the Aborigines of Australia used the returning variety of throwing sticks. (For more specialized boomerangs, see "Primitive Weaponry" in *DRAGON® Magazine* #210, and the listings of the *watilikri* and the *wongala*.)

Safely catching a returning boomerang requires a successful Dexterity roll with a –2 penalty if the would-be catcher is unskilled, a –1 penalty if he or she is proficient in its use (even many Aborigines simply let a returning boomerang fall to the ground), and no penalties if the catcher is specialized in its use. Roll 1d6 if the catch attempt fails; on a roll of 1–3, the catcher suffers 1 point of damage from the returning boomerang.

African tribes used the **hunga-munga**, a wicked-looking throwing knife with a huge curved blade and protruding spikes, all razor-sharp, so that the target suffers damage when hit by any part of the weapon other than the lower half of the handle. Medieval Europe saw the **hurlbat**, an all-steel throwing ax resembling a miniature halberd that has a top and back spike as well as the hand-ax blade. Moreover, the base of the handle has a similar spike, so the hurlbat causes damage no matter which portion of it strikes the foe.

The Japanese **uchi-ne** resembles a large handheld dart or short javelin. The **aklys** is a short throwing club attached to the thrower's wrist by a long cord for easy retrieval. A throwing hammer version of this weapon was immortalized by the fantasy writer Abraham Merrit as the weapon of choice of one of the main villains in his novel *The Dweller in the Mirage*. Merrit even went so far as to suggest that this weapon was the inspiration for the Norse myth of *Mjolnir*, the hammer of Thor, which always returned to its owner after striking the target.

Rocks

Hand-hurled rocks have been effective missile weapons since prehistoric times. The most famous troops in historical times who threw rocks were the *psiloi* of ancient Greece. PCs who like to attack fortified cities, towns, and villages would do well to remember that during sieges, the women and children of a besieged community would contribute to the common defense by dropping stones, pots of boiling water or oil, and

other unpleasantness on the attackers, thereby increasing the number of defending "troops." Aside from specialized soldiers like the *psiloi*, no one is likely to specialize in throwing rocks.

Blowguns

The regular blowgun is already covered in the *Player's Handbook*, but there is an interesting variant: the **sumpitan**, or **sumpit**, used by the Dyaks of Borneo. A powerful weapon with tiny missiles, it is said to have a range of up to 80 yards, though 15–20 yards is the normal working range. Naturally, darts and needles from this weapon won't go through any type of armor or even thick clothing, but those with exposed skin (including helmet-wearers whose visors are up) are vulnerable. Finally, a spearhead is lashed to the weapon just beneath the muzzle (causing damage like a normal spear), making the sumpitan the blowgun equivalent of a rifle with a bayonette.

Darts

This category includes various types of **shuriken**, although many of the various types of shuriken are not "darts" per se.

Javelins and Spear Throwers

Javelins come in all sizes, such as the relatively small **jarid** of the Middle East, which is meant to be used from horseback; this weapon is expensive because it is often made entirely of steel and has a large ornamental cap over the butt. The Zulu *assegai*, designed mainly for throwing, has comparable statistics.

The **spear-thrower** is a device for hurling regular spears. More famous is the mesoamerican **atlatl**, which hurls large darts or small javelins with great force; Cortez's men were more impressed with the atlatl than with the relatively weak bows used by the Aztecs. A "double-barreled" atlatl can hurl two darts at once. Loading the darts and slinging them each requires 1 round.

One method of increasing the range of javelins is to attach a leather thong to the shaft, with the thrower grasping it instead of the weapon itself when throwing. This is why all-iron or mostly-iron Roman javelins like the **verutum** and the heavier **pilum** have ranges that are comparable to those of conventional wooden javelins; the thongs made all the difference. (Note: The table shows the range of the conventional AD&D javelin with these various aids. Without them, the range provided in the *Player's Handbook* applies.)

The Romans favored soft, untempered iron for their javelins because when the weapon stuck in an enemy shield, the shaft would bend under its own weight, making it impossible to yank the weapon out and hurl it back at the Romans. In AD&D terms, it takes 1d6 rounds to hammer a bent iron shaft straight so it can be yanked out of a shield. Early Roman javelins had fragile head-lashings that broke on impact, so only the spearhead would be stuck in the shield, leaving nothing for an enemy to grasp.

The **plumbata** was used in the declining days of the Empire. Either a short javelin or a large dart, its range and striking power were increased by feathers and a lump of lead placed on the shaft just below the head.

A final means of increasing range, one used extensively in antiquity, involved wrapping a cord around the javelin's shaft. The wielder holds onto one end of the cord while throwing the weapon. As the cord unwound, it imparted a toplike spin to the weapon, increasing its range and penetrating power. Because most self bows (that is, noncomposite bows) were relatively weak, slings and specialized javelins often outranged them, with disastrous effects for the archers.

Barbed javelins were often used to increase damage. Would-be surgeons often had to choose between making the original wound larger or creating a new one by pushing the weapon all the way through. Noted barbed javelins include the Celtic *angon* and the *saunion* of the Celtiberian Spaniards.

Many early civilized nations consisted of huddled masses of mostly unarmored men armed with spears, hand-axes, and weak self bows. With the twin inventions of the chariot and the composite bow, the chariot-mounted archer became the troop type of choice. These units engaged in archery duels with enemies during headlong charges, then circled and picked off the slower, outranged infantry. Because both chariots and composite bows were so expensive, only a handful of armies could afford to use them.

Slings

The famed slayer of Goliath, the sling is one of the great missile weapons of antiquity. Historically, the most famous users of slings are the mercenaries from the Balearic Islands, who served Carthage during the Punic Wars. A Balearic slinger could not only pick a flying bird out of the air, but if the target were a raven or similarly large bird, the slinger could take off its head without injuring the body. According to the Roman historian Vegetius, Balearic children were expert slingers, as their parents refused to feed them until they could make an accurate cast at a target.

Aside from the standard AD&D sling, the Romans used a larger sling called the **funda**.

There is an unfortunate misconception in the AD&D rules that the staff-sling is good only for hurling large missiles at close range. Roman slingers training with their staff-sling, the **fustabalus**, were expected to hit targets at a range of 200 yards. Roman staff slingers were referred to as fustibalatores.

The Incas and the mesoamerican tribes all relied largely on the sling as their best missile weapon. In the table, the Incan sling is referred to as the **huaraca**. (The Aztec word for sling was *tematlatl*.) Native American slings were made of plaited or twisted threads of cotton, wool, or maguay fiber. The conquistadors of Cortez and Pizarro feared the sling more than any other missile weapon, as it could break bones beneath plate armor and even stun a soldier wearing a helmet. During the siege of Cuzco, an Incan sling stone scored a direct hit on a conquistador's sword and snapped the sturdy blade in two.

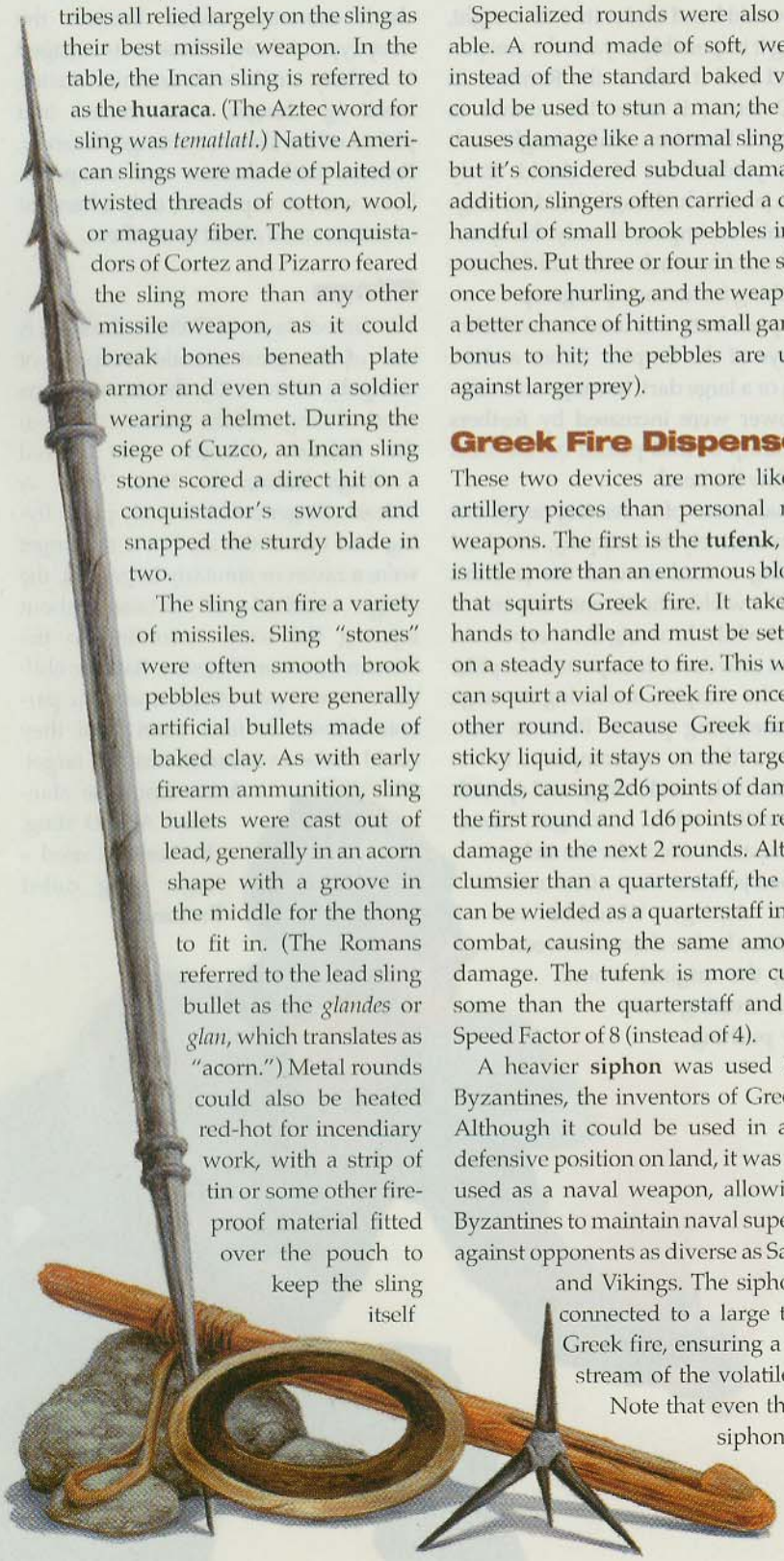
The sling can fire a variety of missiles. Sling "stones" were often smooth brook pebbles but were generally artificial bullets made of baked clay. As with early firearm ammunition, sling bullets were cast out of lead, generally in an acorn shape with a groove in the middle for the thong to fit in. (The Romans referred to the lead sling bullet as the *glandes* or *glan*, which translates as "acorn.") Metal rounds could also be heated red-hot for incendiary work, with a strip of tin or some other fireproof material fitted over the pouch to keep the sling itself from burning. Most sling rounds were no larger than a hen's egg at most, but Trajan's Column depicts Roman slingers hurling stones the size of a man's fist. Recycling spent rounds was important for logistical reasons, and in the Aztec Empire, manufactured clay bullets made up a large part of the tribute subject peoples sent their overlords.

Specialized rounds were also available. A round made of soft, wet clay instead of the standard baked version could be used to stun a man; the round causes damage like a normal sling stone, but it's considered subdual damage. In addition, slingers often carried a double handful of small brook pebbles in their pouches. Put three or four in the sling at once before hurling, and the weapon has a better chance of hitting small game (+3 bonus to hit; the pebbles are useless against larger prey).

Greek Fire Dispensers

These two devices are more like light artillery pieces than personal missile weapons. The first is the **tufenk**, which is little more than an enormous blowgun that squirts Greek fire. It takes two hands to handle and must be set down on a steady surface to fire. This weapon can squirt a vial of Greek fire once every other round. Because Greek fire is a sticky liquid, it stays on the target for 3 rounds, causing 2d6 points of damage in the first round and 1d6 points of residual damage in the next 2 rounds. Although clumsier than a quarterstaff, the tufenk can be wielded as a quarterstaff in melee combat, causing the same amount of damage. The tufenk is more cumbersome than the quarterstaff and has a Speed Factor of 8 (instead of 4).

A heavier **siphon** was used by the Byzantines, the inventors of Greek fire. Although it could be used in a static defensive position on land, it was chiefly used as a naval weapon, allowing the Byzantines to maintain naval superiority against opponents as diverse as Saracens and Vikings. The siphon was connected to a large tank of Greek fire, ensuring a steady stream of the volatile fluid. Note that even the large siphon has a pitifully short range; anyone who tries to employ a Greek fire dispenser in a pitched battle in the open will probably be picked off by enemy missile fire before he or she can get close enough to use the weapons effectively.



Conclusion

The weapons in this article can even the odds in any campaign. Give your party's rangers, haughty and proud of their prowess with the bow, and its equally haughty melee specialists clad in plate mail, a taste of what primitive missile weapons are really capable of. They'll scream bloody murder—and possibly be subjected to it as well—but it will liven up the adventure, and that's all that matters in the end.

Greg Detwiler includes so much research material with his weapons articles that we're more than a little scared of him. Be sure to point the authorities in the right direction should the editors come to a messy end.

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Table of Missile Weapons

Weapon:	ROF	Range (yards) S	M	L	Cost	Weight (lb.)	Size	Type	Speed Factor	Damage S/M	L
Aklys	1	20	40	60	2 gp	2	S	B	4	1d6	1d3
Atlatl	1/2	30	60	90	1 gp	1	S	—	7	—	—
Atlatl, Dbl. Grvd.	1/2	30	60	90	1 gp	1	S	—	9	—	—
Boomerang	1	50	100	150	2 cp	½	S	B	4	1d3	1d2
Fustibalus	—	—	—	—	4 sp	2	M	—	11	—	—
Bullet	2/1	80	160	240	1 sp	—	S	B	—	1d4+1	1d6+1
Stone	2/1	60	120	180	—	—	S	B	—	1d4	1d4
Large bullet	2/1	50	100	200	2 sp	½	S	B	—	1d6+1	1d8+1
Large stone	2/1	30	60	90	—	½	S	B	—	1d4+1	1d4+1
Funda	—	—	—	—	2 sp	1/10	M	—	7	—	—
Bullet	1	80	160	240	5 cp	—	S	B	—	1d6+1	1d6+2
Stone	1	60	120	180	—	—	S	B	—	1d4+1	1d4+2
Large bullet	1	60	120	180	1 sp	½	S	B	—	1d6+1	1d8+2
Large stone	1	50	100	150	—	½	S	B	—	1d4+1	1d6+2
Huaraca	—	—	—	—	2 cp	1/10	S	—	6	—	—
Bullet	1	100	200	300	1 sp	—	S	B	—	1d4+1	1d6+1
Stone	1	80	160	240	—	—	S	B	—	1d4	1d4
Large bullet	1	80	160	240	3 sp	½	S	B	—	1d6+1	1d8+1
Large stone	1	40	80	120	—	½	S	B	—	1d6	1d6
Hurlbat	1	10	20	30	2 gp	6	M	P/S	8	1d8	1d6
Hunga-Munga	1	10	20	30	3 gp	5	M	P/S	5	1d6	1d6
Javelin, Corded	1	20	40	60	7 sp	3	M	P	4	1d8	1d8
Javelin, Barbed	1	20	40	60	1 gp	2	M	P	4	2d4	1d10
Javelin, Thonged	1	20	40	60	6 sp	2	M	P	4	1d6+1	1d6+1
Jarid (assegai)	1	30	60	90	4 sp	1	S	P	3	1d4+1	1d4+1
Lipan	1	10	20	30	6 cp	2	M	B	4	1d4	1d3
Mace, Throwing	1	2	4	6	3 gp	5	S	B	6	1d6	1d4+1
Pilum	1	20	40	60	2 gp	8	M	P	7	1d10	1d10
Plumbata	2/1	20	40	60	1 gp	2	S	P	3	1d6	1d4
Rock, Light	2	5	10	20	—	½	S	B	2	1d4	1d3
Rock, Medium	1	4	8	16	—	1	S	B	4	1d6	1d4
Rock, Heavy	1/2	2	4	8	—	3	M	B	8	1d8	1d6
Siphon, Greek Fire*	—	3	—	—	40 gp	varies	L	—	12	special	special
Shuriken, Spike	2	10	—	—	3 sp	1/10	S	P	2	1d4	1d3
Shuriken, Large star	3	5	10	20	5 sp	½	S	P	2	1d6	1d4
Shuriken, Small star	4	5	10	20	3 sp	1/10	S	P	2	1d4	1d4
Sling	—	—	—	—	1 cp	1/10	S	—	6	—	—
Large Bullet	1	40	80	160	2 cp	½	S	B	—	1d6+1	1d8+1
Large Stone	1	30	60	120	—	½	S	B	—	1d4+1	1d4+1
Spear Thrower	1/2	20	40	60	2 gp	½	—	—	6	—	—
Staff Sling	2/1	—	—	—	2 sp	2	M	—	11	—	—
Large bullet	2/1	—	30	60	1 sp	½	S	B	—	1d8	1d8
Large stone	2/1	—	30	60	—	½	S	B	—	1d6	1d6
Sumpitan	—	—	—	—	6 gp	2	L	**	5	1d6**	1d6**
Barbed dart	2/1	20	40	80	1 sp	1/10	S	P	—	1d3	1d2
Needle	2/1	15	30	60	2 cp	—	S	P	—	1	1
Tufenk*	1/2	1	—	—	14 gp	5	L	**	9	1d6**	1d6**
Uchi-ne	1	10	20	30	2 gp	1	S	P	3	1d4	1d4
Verutum	1	20	40	60	1 gp	5	M	P	6	1d8	1d8

* The siphon dispenser and tufenk require Greek fire. One flask of Greek fire costs 50 gp. The siphon dispenser expends the entire flask in 1 round; the tufenk expends one flask in 3 rounds.

** When used as a quarterstaff, the sumpitan and the tufenk are considered Type B weapons and inflict 1d6 points of damage vs. Small, Medium, and Large-sized targets.

Secrets of the Brotherhood of True Flame

by Paul Fraser

illustrated by Stephen Daniele

Deep within the burning wastes of the Great Anvil, hollowed out of an extinct volcano, lies Krak al-Mazhar, the main fortress of the infamous Brotherhood of True Flame. From this impregnable hideaway, the Brotherhood's evil master, Nar-Aidiya, A.K.A. the Bonfire, plots and schemes for mastership of Zakhara.

Here at last are many of the Brotherhood's sorcerous secrets. But beware! Such secrets are not meant for outsiders' eyes. Should the Brotherhood learn you possess such forbidden knowledge, your life will be forfeit!

In this article, the abbreviation *AA* refers to *Arabian Adventures*, *ToM* to the *Tome of Magic* and *CSH* to *The Complete Sha'ir's Handbook*. An item marked with an asterisk (*) indicates new magic described herein.

New Magical Item: Aba of the Elements

These act as *robes of the archmagi*, except that rather than being classified by alignment (white, gray, black), they are divided according to elemental province (red for flame, green for sea, blue for wind, white for sand). An elemental mage who dons an *aba* of the wrong province suffers as per an evil wizard donning a white robe outlined in the *Dungeon Master® Guide*. Sorcerers can wear *abas* appropriate to either of the two provinces in which they specialize. If they don an *aba* of a different province, they suffer as per a neutral wizard donning a white or black *robe of the archmagi*.

GP Value: 65,000 **XP Value**: 6,000

Table 1: Tattoo of Power Effects

Lvl.	Protection
1	*endure heat* (as 1st-level priest spell)
2	*aura of comfort* (as 2nd-level priest spell from *ToM*)
4	as a *ring of fire resistance*
6	*resist fire* (as 2nd-level priest spell)
8	*flameproof* (as 6th-level wizard spell from *AA*)
10	*flame walk* (as 3rd-level priest spell)
12	*protection from fire* (as 3rd-level priest spell cast upon another; absorbs up to 12 points of damage per level of the mamluk before being dispelled for 24 hours)

The Imperishable

The Imperishable is an elite mamluk order that defends Krak al-Mazhar. Its ranks are maintained by the purchase of slaves brought to the fortress as children. The Imperishable spend their entire lives in Krak al-Mazhar. When too old for duty, they turn to training new mamluks.

The mamluks dress in glittering red scalemail with white abas and yellow silk sashes. They sport crimson facial tattoos with fire motifs. A variation on the *tattoo of power* (*CSH*) spell known only to the Brotherhood allows the Imperishable's tattoos to be imbued with fire resistant magic; the level of protection improves as the tattoos are embellished at higher levels (though the effects are not cumulative), as noted on **Table 1.**

The Flamedeath Fellowship

A small group of holy slayers are quartered at the fortress, ready to be dispatched on missions at the Bonfire's command. These men and women are hand-picked from among the Brotherhood's most fanatical, experienced members. Dressed in blinding white abas, they are equipped with one of the Brotherhood's most horrific and closely guarded secrets: the *daggers of fiery demise* (see sidebar). The holy slayers have been known to use the daggers on themselves when in danger of capture.

New Magical Item: Dagger of Fiery Demise

When drawn, the blade of this *dagger* +3 appears to be wreathed in a flickering blue flame. When a victim is stabbed, the flame engulfs the victim. If the victim fails a saving throw vs. death magic, the dagger immediately reduces the victim's body to ashes. Despite the fire's intensity, nearby surroundings are unharmed, as are the victim's clothes and possessions. The victim's soul is incinerated, negating *resurrection* or *raise dead* spells. Attempts to cast *speak with dead* also fail. Only a *wish* can return the victim to life. A successful saving throw destroys the dagger but does not consume the victim.

Note the *dagger's* ability works only if the victim is stabbed. Using the dagger to make a successful slashing attack nullifies its special power. An unsuccessful thrown attack also renders it a simple *dagger* +3.

Each *dagger* comes with a special sheath to contain the flame safely.

GP Value: 25,000 **XP Value**: 2,500

The Shig'harakhi

The "younger brothers" are promising lesser fire mages (6th-8th level) studying under the Bonfire. They are brought to Krak al-Mazhar (and leave when their studies are complete) via magic, never knowing the fortress's exact location. Attempts to learn its whereabouts are punished by death. A *geas* laid upon their departure prevents them from willingly revealing the stronghold's secrets. Each shig'harak wears an *aba of the elements* (see sidebar), in addition to whatever personal magics he or she might possess.

Head Taker

A slayer tasked genie who serves the Bonfire as personal bodyguard and assassin, the Head Taker is slavishly devoted to his master and revels in his work. Across his massive chest he wears a leather baldric from which hang the shrunken, mummified heads of worthy foes. He wields Firefiend, a *scimitar of speed* +5 (see sidebar), and Widowmaker, a *vorpal great scimitar* +3 (see the *Land of Fate* boxed set). His two clawed hands are coated with a virulent contact poison (Type N; see the *Dungeon Master Guide*) to which he himself is immune.

The Bonfire

Nar-Aidiya's true appearance is kept a mystery even from most of the Brotherhood. He appears to be in his early forties with glossy black hair, a goatee, and piercing black eyes. He wears a shimmering scarlet aba embroidered with gold thread (an *aba of the elements*—see sidebar), a white silk sash, and a white turban pinned in place with the *Incandescent Eye* (see sidebar). The Bonfire rules Krak al-Mazhar with an iron fist. He cares not a whit that he is not loved, only feared and hated, so long as he is obeyed. He exercises power from the *Molten Throne* (see sidebar), located in the audience chamber known as the Infernal Hall.

The Molten Throne

The *Throne* sits atop a 10'-diameter stone column, surrounded by a moat filled with a *permanent wall of fire*. The column is usually 10 feet high, although it can be raised or lowered at the whim of the *Throne's* occupant. The column also rotates 360 degrees. Normally, the Throne's occupant faces down the long audience room toward the hall's entrance, but the column can be rotated so the *Throne's* occupant faces the wall behind it. A *golden mirror* (see sidebar) hangs on this wall directly opposite the *Throne* at a height of 10 feet.

The Great Garden

One of the wonders of Krak al-Mazhar is the Great Garden. Located deep underground, the garden's flowers, shrubs, plants, and bubbling marble fountain are real; the sunny blue sky, bird calls, and insect sounds are illusion. While the chamber is perhaps 100 feet in diameter, careful construction and clever magic combine to make the garden appear endless. A powerful dweomer makes its winding path act like a *maze* spell. Those who speak a secret command word before entering are immune.

New Magical Item: Firefiend

This *scimitar of speed* +5 allows the wielder to self-immolate once per day for 2d4 rounds. When activated, the *scimitar* and wielder are bathed in golden flames. The flames inflict an additional 1d4+4 points of damage per hit with the *scimitar*. Anyone coming into contact with the wielder's body also suffers 1d4+4 points of damage per round.

Any metallic object (such as a weapon) that touches the wielder must make a successful saving throw vs. acid or melt. Flammable objects (such as wood or cloth) that touch the flames must make a successful saving throw vs. magical fire or ignite. The wielder's own possessions are immune, as long as they are in contact with his or her body at the time the flames are invoked. The flames also render the wielder immune to magical and nonmagical cold.

GP Value: 8,000 **XP Value**: 4,000

The garden follows the cycles of the sun and moon outside Krak al-Mazhar. During the day in the Great Anvil, the garden is bathed in sunlight; when night falls outdoors, an image of the moon and stars appears overhead in the garden. The garden is blessed with a constant breeze.

The Bonfire can often be found relaxing here. The garden is loyally tended by Mujibur, a slayer tasked genie served by four copper automatons.

New Spells

A shig'harak must successfully research a new spell for the Brotherhood to complete his or her studies under the Bonfire. A few are outlined below. The more powerful spells were created by the Brotherhood's leadership.

Brand

(Alteration, Necromancy)
Level: 1
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: Up to 1 square foot
Saving Throw: Neg.

A sadistic variation on *wizard mark*, this spell burns one to six written characters into any surface, be it stone, wood, metal or flesh. On an inanimate surface, the mark cannot be dispelled or erased, but it can be removed by the caster.

A victim who is branded must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or suffer 1 point of damage per inscribed character. A successful saving throw vs. spell negates the spell. Nothing less than a *heal* spell can remove the brand from flesh.

If the brand is visible to others (such as on the face), the victim loses 1 point of Charisma until it is removed.

Fire Spiral

(Evocation, Abjuration)
Level: 3
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

This spell creates a ribbon of flame originating next to the caster's foot and spiraling around his or her body to vanish at a point just above the head. This fiery ribbon flexes to intercept incoming missile weapons or melee attacks. There is no limit to how many attacks the *fire spiral* can intercept in a round.

Nonmagical missiles and melee weapons are instantly vaporized by the *fire spiral* before they can strike the caster. Magical missiles and melee weapons must make successful saving throws vs. magical fire to avoid destruction. If they save, they are only deflected from the caster, not destroyed.

An attacker grasping a melee weapon that touches the *fire spiral* suffers 2d6 points of heat damage (with a saving throw vs. spell for half damage). Anyone attempting to touch the caster barehanded suffers 4d6 points of damage (with a saving throw for half damage).

The *fire spiral* automatically flexes so as to always stay about 1 foot away from the caster's body. The wizard can cast spells or perform defensive actions without interfering with the *fire spiral*. However, making a melee attack dispels it instantly.

The material component for this spell is a small piece of pumice.

Heatwave

(Alteration, Evocation)
Level: 4
Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: 20' radius
Saving Throw: ½

This spell creates a radiating blast of intense heat. Those within the area of effect suffer 2d4 points of damage per round. A successful saving throw vs. spell each round halves the damage. The caster is immune.

Shimmering heat distortion causes all creatures within the area of effect (including the caster) to be protected as if wearing a *cloak of displacement* (initial melee and missile attacks automatically miss; –2 AC bonus on subsequent attacks; +2 on saving throws vs. directed attacks such as spells, gazes, and breath weapons; and so on).

Those protected by spells such as *resist fire* are immune to *heatwave*'s damage, but not the visual distortion effects. *True seeing* penetrates the distortion.

This spell melts ice and snow (including that created by *ice storm* or *wall of ice*) and evaporates water, up to 10 cubic feet per round. If cast prior to an *ice storm*, the two spells cancel each other out. If cast prior to a *wall of ice*, *heatwave* halves the latter's dimensions and damage.

The material components of this spell are a small folding fan (not consumed) and a drop of mercury (consumed).

Tears of Fire

(Evocation)
Level: 5
Range: 0

Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: ½

This spell creates 1d4+1 spheres of flame, each about 6 inches in diameter. The spheres follow the caster, circling continuously in a ring just above his or her head. They shed illumination equivalent to a *light* spell and radiate heat equivalent to a campfire, warding off dampness or chill.

Once the spell is cast, the wizard can freely perform other actions, including spellcasting or even sleeping, without affecting the spheres.

A silent act of will allows the caster to dispatch one or more spheres to attack visible foes within 20 yards. The spheres strike unerringly, inflicting 3d4 points of damage (with a successful saving throw indicating half damage) and setting alight combustibles that fail a saving throw vs. magical fire (–1 penalty on the saving throw per sphere).

There is no limit on how many or how few spheres a wizard can dispatch in a round. Each sphere can attack a separate foe, or all of them can strike a single target, or any combination thereof, as the caster wills.

A caster who unleashes only one sphere per round can perform other actions, including melee attacks or spellcasting. Dispatching more than a single sphere forces the caster to take no other actions that round.

Multiple castings of this spell create no more than five spheres at any one time circling the caster's head.

The material component of this spell is a small candle made from perfumed beeswax valued at no less than 100 gp. One of these candles must be lit (and is consumed) with each casting.

Dehydration

(Alteration, Necromancy)
Level: 6
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 6
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell requires a successful attack roll against the target (who is treated as AC 10 plus Dexterity, shield, and any magical adjustments). The touched creature is immediately dehydrated if he or she fails a saving throw vs. spell. Failure means the victim loses 1d6 Constitution points. Qualities linked to Constitution (such as hit points and System Shock) are also affected. (See the section on Dehydration in Chapter Five of *Arabian Adventures*.) If the victim's Constitution reaches 0, he or she dies. The victim's Resurrection Survival chance is 25%.

A victim can offset this loss only by consuming water or other potable fluids. If the victim is inactive, one-quarter gallon per day will restore 1d8 Constitution points. If the victim is active (engaging in combat, for example), one-half gallon per day is needed. Encumbered victims double their required water intake. Exceeding these amounts each day does not restore additional Constitution points. Hit points lost through a lower Constitution are not regained in this way; additional healing is required.

Monsters and other beings that do not have a listed Constitution instead suffer 4d6 points of damage from this spell.

Gemburst

(Alteration)
Level: 7
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 5 rounds
Area of Effect: 1 fire opal
Saving Throw: None

This spell allows a caster to store a *fireball* inside a fire opal worth at least 1,000 gp. The wizard casts *gemburst* on the fire opal, followed immediately by a *fireball* spell. Both spells are wiped from the caster's memory. He or she is free to memorize new spells to fill the slots.

If the caster fails to cast a *fireball* on the next round following the completion of the *gemburst* spell, the latter fails and must be recast.

The *fireball* is held suspended within the gemstone, which radiates faint evocation magic but otherwise appears normal. When triggered, the *fireball* is centered on the gemstone (which is consumed) and inflicts damage as per the caster's level on all within a 20' radius (save for half).

There are two methods of triggering the *fireball*, one of which must be selected by the caster at the time *gemburst* is cast.

The first method triggers the *fireball* when the caster utters a command word. Distance is not a factor, although the caster must be on the same plane as the gem when the command word is uttered. The amount of time that has elapsed between casting the spell and activating it is irrelevant. If the caster dies without triggering the *fireball*, it dissipates harmlessly.

Alternatively, the caster can specify a single set of circumstances which,

New Magical Item: Golden Mirror

A *golden mirror* hangs in each of the Brotherhood's major strongholds. (See Krak al-Niraan in the boxed set *A Dozen and One Adventures*.) Each is the size of a large circular shield, set into a heavy gold frame. The mirrors are all linked, allowing users to communicate with each other as a *crystal ball with clairaudience*. Unlike a true *crystal ball*, the *mirrors* do not permit scrying other locations. The Bonfire's *golden mirror* has extra abilities: In other such *mirrors*, his features are disguised to appear as if formed from living flames. His *mirror* also functions as a *mirror of mental prowess*.

GP Value: 5,000 **XP Value:** 500

The Bonfire's Mirror

GP Value: 65,000 **XP Value:** 5,500

New Magical Item: The Incandescent Eye

The *Incandescent* Eye is a unique, fiery gem from the Elemental Plane of Fire about the size of a cherry. It is whispered that the Bonfire won this priceless item while on a mission for Kossuth himself. It bears the following powers: Beings from the Elemental Plane of Fire find themselves unable to harm the *eye's* bearer as long as it is within sight (that is, not hidden under clothing or shrouded in darkness).

Once per day the bearer can cast *firefeed*, healing him or herself by touching nonmagical flames, which inflict no harm on the bearer. The amount of damage healed varies with the fire's intensity: A torch or lantern heals 1d6 points, a campfire or blazing fireplace heals 2d6 points, a large bonfire heals 3d6 points, and a conflagration such as a burning building heals 4d6 points (the maximum possible). The flames are immediately extinguished to feed the eye's healing power. This ability takes 1 round to use.

Once per week the bearer can summon and control a 12-HD fire elemental as if using a *brazier commanding fire elementals*.

GP Value: 35,000 **XP Value**: 6,000

when fulfilled, automatically trigger the *fireball*. The prescribed conditions can be as specific or general as desired, but they must depend on audible or visual triggers (as per the *magic mouth* spell). In this case, *gemburst* continues to function until triggered, even if the caster dies.

The spell still functions normally if the gemstone is worked into jewelry. One wizard secretly cast the spell on a fire opal set into a sultan's ring, scryed his activities, then triggered it while the sultan was meeting a rival mage.

A *gemburst* can be dispelled. It also fails if the *fireball* is activated while the gemstone is within an *anti-magic shell* or magic dead area.

Eruption
(Conjuration/Summoning)
Level: 9
Range: 50 yards + 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 9
Area of Effect: One 20' cube/level
Saving Throw: Special

When cast upon land, this spell opens a one-way gate to the Para-elemental Plane of Magma. The ground within the area of effect is immediately permeated with molten magma (equivalent to exceptionally hot fire for spells such as *resist fire*).

Creatures within the affected area that are unable to levitate or fly sink into the magma at the rate of 5 feet per round, suffering 6d6 points of damage each round. (A successful saving throw reduces damage by half.) On the second round, they begin to suffocate; see the rules for holding one's breath in the *Player's Handbook*. Items exposed to the magma must make a successful saving throw vs. magical fire each round or be destroyed.

The magma remains until a *dispel magic* spell is cast upon it or it cools, which takes 1d4 days.

This spell inflicts 4d12 points of structural damage, as detailed in the *PLAYER'S OPTION®: Combat & Tactics* rulebook. In wooded areas, it might spark forest fires.

If cast upon a body of water whose surface area is greater than that affected by the spell, *eruption* fails. If the surface area is equal or smaller, the spell creates a cloud of scalding steam equivalent in volume to the body of water affected (that is, a pond 10 feet wide, 20 feet long, and 10 feet deep creates a 2,000-cubic-foot steam cloud). The cloud inflicts 4d6 points of damage per round to those within the area of effect, with a saving throw for half damage. It dissipates in 1d6+4 rounds, or faster if affected by spells such as *gust of wind*.

The material component of this spell is a jacinth worth at least 10,000 gp. The gem is crushed when the spell is cast.

Author Paul Fraser's apartment was gutted by a mysterious fire shortly after this article was prepared. His current whereabouts are unknown.

New Artifact: The Molten Throne

An artist tasked genie carved this imposing edifice from solidified flame scooped from the Elemental Plane of Fire. It was a gift to the Bonfire from the Sultan of the Efreet, Marrake al-Sidan al-Hariq ben Lazan. The translucent Throne resembles a frozen pillar of flame. Basalt studs on the arms allow the user to elevate and lower the stone column on which it rests, or rotate it 360 degrees. Its powers are:

Constant: The occupant is completely immune to fire, normal and magical.

Invoked: Once per day, the Throne can act as a rod of rulership. Once per round, the occupant can cast flame of justice (AA), chastise (CSH), or ESP.

Curse: Anyone who sits upon the Throne and who is not a member of the Brotherhood is immediately struck by a 20-HD flame strike. Each use of its powers has a 10% cumulative chance of turning the occupant toward the worship of Kossuth and altering his or her alignment to evil unless a saving throw vs. spell succeeds.

It is said the Throne can be destroyed if simultaneously caught in the whirlwinds of one thousand djinn.

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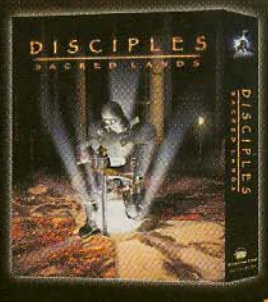

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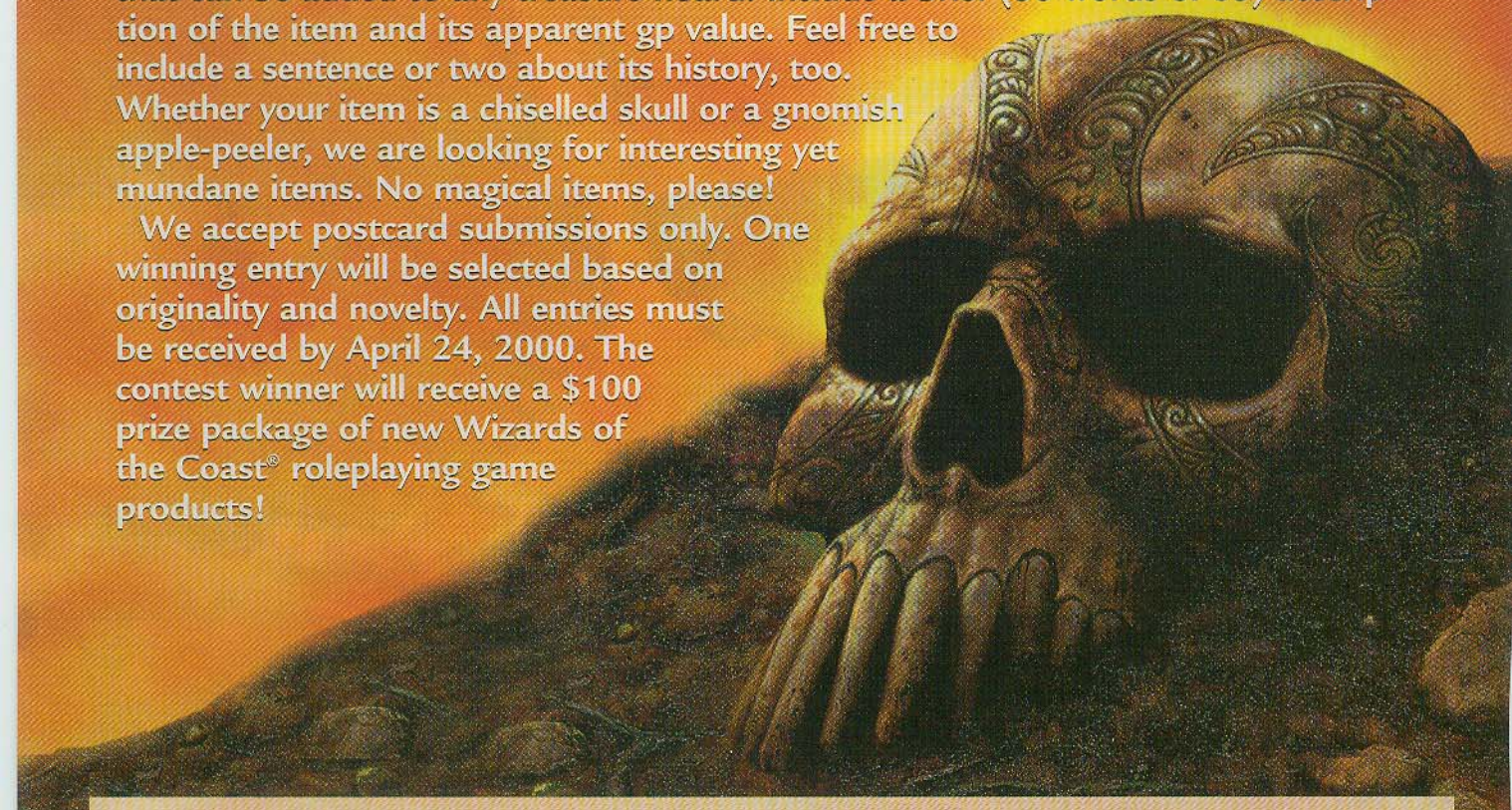
Unearthed Treasures

In this month's cover, Fred Fields unearths a long-lost treasure of the ancients—a skull with an unknown legacy. Although magical items are greatly prized by heroes great and small, not all treasures in the D&D® game must be magical in nature.

Send us a postcard describing, in modest detail, a fascinating nonmagical treasure that can be added to any treasure hoard. Include a brief (50 words or so) description of the item and its apparent gp value. Feel free to include a sentence or two about its history, too. Whether your item is a chiselled skull or a gnomish apple-peeler, we are looking for interesting yet mundane items. No magical items, please!

We accept postcard submissions only. One winning entry will be selected based on originality and novelty. All entries must be received by April 24, 2000. The contest winner will receive a $100 prize package of new Wizards of the Coast® roleplaying game products!



"Unearthed Treasures" Contest Rules

1. Entry: To enter, send a postcard including your name, address, phone number, and your treasure ("Entry") to *Dragon Magazine* "Unearthed Treasures" Contest, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707. No purchase required. You may submit as many postcards as you wish, but only one Entry per submission. There is no advantage to submitting the same Entry more than once. If you are under 18, you must have your parent's permission to enter. Entries must be received before midnight (Pacific Time), April 24, 2000. One winning Entry will be selected by a team of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ("WotC") judges based on the Entry's originality and appropriateness. All decisions are final. The probability of winning is based exclusively on the quality of the Entries received.

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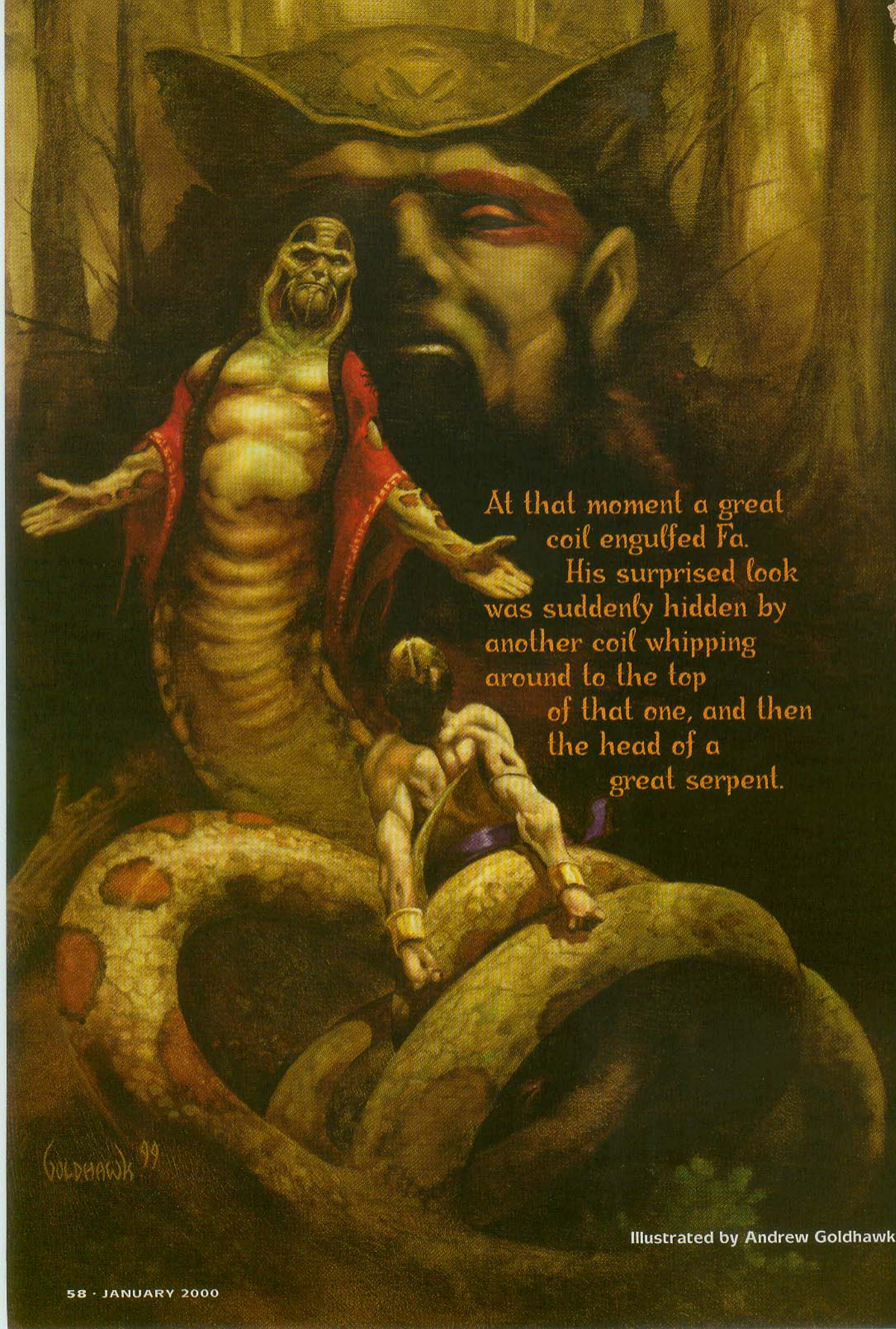
At that moment a great coil engulfed Fa. His surprised look was suddenly hidden by another coil whipping around to the top of that one, and then the head of a great serpent.
GOLDHAWK '99

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The Python King's Treasure

Fool Wolf only had a few days left to live when he saw the most beautiful woman he had ever laid eyes upon.

Her hair was spun black glass, spilling down the sides of a face incised from amber, flowing over shoulders and down breasts of the same red-gold hue.

He was too far away to see what color her eyes were, but he could feel her gaze on him. She stood on the edge of a cliff, half a bow-shot above him, looking down at the jade sea and the cinnamon sun it was swallowing in the west.

And at him, on the desolate strand, fifteen days along the way to starvation.

He stood rooted, stunned, watching her naked lithe half-shadow in the melting sunlight.

She is pretty, the goddess imprisoned in him sighed, wistfully. *She looks good enough to eat.*

Fool Wolf's stomach growled in agreement.

A month earlier, in the Land of Nine Princes, in the many-tiered city of Fanva, Fool Wolf had been considerably better fed. He had arrived in Fanva with a single carnelian and two copper coins, fleeing from the blood-guttered city of Rumq Qaj. In the incense-choked gambling temples of Fanva, he had increased that jewel and those two coins into what was for him a small fortune. He took a room in a good inn, draped himself in silk, and feasted on roast pork, pheasant, peacock, and eel. He ate sweet fruits from the islands—Lom, whitemelon, fernpears, bananas. He drank wines he could not name but which pleased him a great deal, and he bedded a series of women of the same sort.

His fortunes changed, of course. He was caught cheating by one of the gambling-house priests. As gambling was a religious matter in Fanva, and cheating sacrilege, he was sentenced to death.

While bets were being placed on which form of death would be chosen and how long he would survive, Fool Wolf escaped his would-be-executioners and fled into the Gibbering Quarter, where foreign diplomats and madmen lived. He eluded his pursuit through the open window of a third-story apartment, waiting breathlessly for distance to hush their cries and footsteps, alert for any movement by the occupants of his refuge.

None came, and after five hundred heartbeats, he began to explore. It was a large place, well furnished with exotic rugs, censers of gold and cream-colored ivory, screens of lacquered wood and stippled velum. It smelled strange, like burnt sugar candy and wet dog.

And books, everywhere. Crammed into shelves, littered on the rugs and polished wooden floors, piled on low sitting-desks.

Behind one of those desks sat a dead man. He hadn't been dead long—drool was still leaking from his mouth. His flesh was still warm.

Fool Wolf could see no obvious reason why the man died, unless it was the small, empty cordial glass on the table before him. Suicide by poison, or just a last drink before dying from some natural cause? Probably the first—aside from being dead, the corpse did not look unhealthy. In fact, he looked something like an older Fool Wolf—tall and lean, narrow of face with sharp, high cheekbones, long black hair plaited into a queue.

That meant the dead man's clothes would probably fit Fool Wolf. He began rummaging about the apartment and shortly found a closet full of green robes. He took one and found it fit rather well, so he cast about for further items of disguise. A turban, of course, and something with which to make a false beard, perhaps.

He congratulated himself on his luck. It looked as if no one else lived here—there were no woman's clothes, no servants' quarters. The dead man seemed to have lived alone. He could keep his head down here until the pursuit cooled.

He had just settled onto a comfortable cushion with a plate of olives when the door splintered inward. Fool Wolf froze, an olive halfway to his mouth.

Standing in the doorframe was a rather large man in a black fighting sarong and loose, blood-red shirt. His arms, visible from the elbow, were covered in elaborate tattoos. On his forehead was a single tattoo, the glyph of a tiger chasing its own tail. A long, curved sword gleamed in his sash.

The black-clad man walked into the room, followed by two hulking eunuchs that made him look like a dwarf, and ten guardsmen behind *them*. All had the tiger tattoo.

"Lohar Pang?" The man in black said. It sounded something like a question.

The Python King's Treasure

Fool Wolf pursed his lips. The corpse was in the next room. If they went in there …

"Of course," he replied. "Lohar Pang, at your service."

"Wonderful. You will come with us."

"I'm busy at the moment," Fool Wolf replied, bowing.

"Ah. My apologies," the man in black said. "I misspoke. You will come with us, or you will die."

"Oh," Fool Wolf said, "this is a day for misstatement, for I'm not busy at all. Shall we go?"

Fool Wolf had heard of Prince Fa—few in Fanva had not. He wasn't one of the nine princes, but he was a merchant of considerable power and reportedly dark tastes. He looked about sixty, with a trim beard and sooty eyes. He wore a robe so deeply red it was almost black, bordered with twining serpents and eels picked out in garnet. His throne was of heavy dun wood and would have been rather plain if not for the human skulls along the armrests and high back. Into each skull twenty or so nails had been driven. Fool Wolf suspected that this had been done when the heads were still breathing and blinking and screaming.

Prince Fa frowned down at Fool Wolf, then examined his long, gold-leafed nails. "This should be a simple task, for one of your repute," the prince said, flashing teeth like bits of polished abalone. "You have familiarized yourself with the—problem—and with the gods in question? You examined the objects I sent you?"

"Absolutely," Fool Wolf said, wondering what in the name of the Horse Mother prince Fa was talking about.

"And you still say you can do it?"

"Of course. I have no doubts."

"Good. Then you will live. You will depart immediately." He leaned forward, and his shadowed eyes caught the flicker of a candle flame, a red fish in deep water. "If I have to take a hand in this myself, I will be most displeased," Fa murmured. "I detest the sea. You understand the consequences if I am forced to do something I hate?"

"Of course, Prince Fa," Fool Wolf said, wondering what the consequences were, imagining they were unpleasant.

"Good. One of my yachts is prepared to leave."

It occurred to Fool Wolf that a trip by boat would at least get him far from the city. After that—well, there would surely be opportunities.

A week later, he was still watching for the first of those hypothetical opportunities. More specifically, he was gazing at the horizon, wondering how big the ocean could be.

Too big to swim, he kept coming back to. So even though he was unwatched by the crew—somewhat avoided, even—there was no place to escape to.

Kreth—the black-saronged warrior from the apartment—joined him at the rail.

"Not much farther," Kreth said, spitting onto the sky-dressed sea, watching the little foam island thus created break up in the ship's wake. "Can you really do it?"

"I've never failed before," Fool Wolf assured him.

"Obviously. But you've never been to *Ranga Lehau* before, either," Kreth grunted. "Still, the prince seems pretty sure of you. He read one of your treatises or somesuch. How will you do it?"

"How do you imagine I will do it?" Fool Wolf asked.

"You don't have to be mysterious," Kreth replied, a bit sulkily. "If you can't tell me, just say so."

"I can't tell you, but you can guess, and I can nod yes or no."

"Never mind then. I'm not good at such games, and I shall see shortly, yes?" He reached over and gave Fool Wolf a slap on the back that clacked his teeth together. "But you *can* do it?"

"Of course." Fool Wolf glanced over at Kreth. "What's your part in all of this? Aside from making sure I do my part?"

"I'm the hunter," Kreth replied. "I will find the Python King's treasure, never fear. He cannot hide it from me."

"I don't doubt that for a moment," Fool Wolf replied.

That's all Fool Wolf got from Kreth, and the hunter was too smart to push any further. Fool Wolf didn't want to ask a question that raised even minor suspicion—he didn't know what Lohar Pang was supposed to know. As long as he was on this boat, with nothing but sea around, he might as well be in Prince Fa's palace.

Thus it was, two days later, when Kreth came to Fool Wolf's cabin and said, "It is time," he still didn't have a fart's whisper of what it was time for.

Up on deck, Kreth pointed to the first land Fool Wolf had seen since the coastline of Fanva faded in the west. It was an island, looking something like a giant black horse tooth sticking up out of the water, with its sheer black cliffs and flat top.

"That is *Ranga Lehau*," Kreth commented. "According to our charts, we cross the *tapu* when we pass those rocks."

Fool Wolf saw the rocks he meant, two pillars of stone jutting up from the water, perhaps three ship's lengths apart. They looked manmade. At the rate the boat was moving, they would reach them soon.

As Fool Wolf studied the rocks and the island, Kreth shuffled impatiently. "Shouldn't you get started?" He asked. He sounded nervous.

"Don't tell me my business," Fool Wolf snapped. Then, a bit more mysteriously, "besides, I *have* started."

"Oh. I thought there would be more—chanting, or something."

"In a moment," Fool Wolf said. "If you will kindly darken your mouth."

The rocks were closer. "Chugaachik!" Fool Wolf chanted. "Do you have any idea what these fools want of me?" He sang in his own tongue, Mang, not a language anyone else on the ship was likely to know.

I don't know, the goddess answered, in that silent place between his breaths. *Why not let me kill them all? That would solve the problem.*

"Because I don't think we can kill them all, even with your power," he sang.

That was a half-truth. He hated Chugaachik, who had killed most everyone he had ever loved and made him a rootless wanderer, far from his native land. She just might be able to kill everyone on the ship, but letting her have her way, even to save his life, was not something he was willing to do unless he knew he had no choice.

Besides, it was his body she used, his body that paid for her excesses.

They were almost to the pillars.

But, Chugaachik offered reluctantly, *there is a large and powerful god crouching there, beneath the water.*

The sea raised up in a mound, and the nose of the boat tilted with it. Fool Wolf ran and jumped as far as he could toward the island. When he hit the water, he began stroking furiously, ignoring the brief screams and rending of wood behind him.

Fifteen days later none of the bodies or supplies from the ship had washed ashore anywhere. He knew—he had made a compete circuit of the island. In the four days it had taken, Fool Wolf had seen no sign of human life and no way to the plateau above him.

And now this impossible woman, gazing down at him from that unattainable place.

"Hello!" He shouted. "Hello up there! Can you help me?"

She cocked her head to the side but otherwise merely continued to stare.

"*Pakena lafa? Em'tagi?*" he croaked, trying Jara and Fanvese. She didn't respond any more than she had to Mang.

"Please," he tried again, "I was shipwrecked and haven't eaten in half a moon."

The woman regarded him for a bit longer, as if he was some strange shorebird with an odd call. Then she turned and walked out of sight, into the forest at the top of the cliff.

For a little while, Fool Wolf nurtured the hope that the woman was coming down for him, following some secret path or tunnel in the rock he hadn't found. She would bring all sorts of things from the paradise above. Whitemelon, roast pig, chicken, deer. Bread. Beer. Wine. The comfort of her flesh, the sweet touch of her lips …

But the sea went from jade to obsidian, and the sky opened its six thousand eyes, and still she did not come. Fool Wolf felt as if he were made of driftwood. Perhaps when he became light enough, the wind would pick him up, and he could fly to the top.

By the time morning greened the eastern sky, he had given up. Whoever the woman was, she hadn't been as impressed with the sight of Fool Wolf as he had been with her. Of course he was half starved, his normally coppery skin burned almost teak and his long black hair in brine-petrified knots. He could hardly blame her if she didn't like what she saw.

Well, no, that wasn't true. He was dying. He did blame her. Her, and the gambling priests, and prince Fa, and Kreth, and every sailor and soldier on the lost boat.

And he blamed the island, of course. From the sea it had looked green and inviting. But all of the green was at the top of those walls of glassy rock. That left him with a narrow strip of sterile white beach, two to twenty paces wide, a few rocky spurs into the sea supporting nothing more edible than barnacles, seagulls he hadn't devised any way to catch, fish that must be out there but which he couldn't find or see in the foaming surf. And he wasn't going too far into that surf, not with whatever-it-was lurking out there.

But if she was up there, that indifferent beauty, there must be a way up—a way he had missed in his four-day circuit of the island.

So, cursing, he went to his one source of sustenance—a small freshwater spring seeping from the base of the cliff. He drank as much as his belly would hold and then started walking. If he remembered correctly, the next spring was more than a day away.

> The sea raised up in a mound, and the nose of the boat tilted with it.

A couple of things occurred to him while walking. The first was that the woman—and whatever other people lived atop the island—might come and go by rope, or ladder, or not at all. Of course, the first time someone went up, there must have been a natural way, but that might have been a thousand years ago.

A more serious worry was that he might not have seen a woman at all. It might have been a ghost, or a goddess, a shapeshifter—or his hungry imagination.

He spent a lot of time studying the edge of the cliff, but he didn't see her again.

The next day he reached the river. He remembered the spot well, because it had been so frustrating. The cliffs here were lower than anywhere else on the island. If he could jump twice again his own height, he would be able to catch the tree roots straggling over the rim. At the lowest point, a waterfall tumbled mockingly into a pool and then flowed out to the waiting ocean. He had looked here for hours, searching for handholds and finding none. No fish in the water, either.

The waterfall had worn a deep grove for itself—a narrow canyon, really. Standing at the base of it, he could curl his fingers onto the top of the ledge the water came over. But with the water pushing down on him, and the stone even smoother than elsewhere, he could never get enough purchase to pull himself up more than a finger's breadth.

He wasn't going to waste his time on it again.

That was when he noticed the falls looked strange. The water was bumping up, flowing over something. He trudged closer.

The Python King's Treasure

A dead tree was wedged in the mouth of the waterfall.

He caught the branch on his third jump, but his muscles had nothing in them, and he just hung there, water battering him.

Let me help you, the Chugaachik said.

"No. If I do, then you'll kill her. And anyone else up there."

Probably. But why should you care? She left you to die.

Chugaachik had a point. But instead of calling on her help, he pulled again, knowing it was his last chance. If he failed, he *would* have to let Chugaachik have him.

I won't eat her right away, the goddess promised. *I'll let you have her body first. I know you want it.*

His arms trembled, and he almost gave up. Then he remembered the last time the goddess had been loose in his body—and what they had done together—and found some extra strength, enough for one great heave that allowed him to hook his arm over the wedged log. Another, lesser jerk, and he had a leg over, too.

He lay that way for a moment, draped over the log, suddenly, absurdly happy. He managed to cough out a series of chuckles while garnering his energy to move again.

The river broadened upstream, and the canyon walls here were still too steep to climb. But the banks of the river were wide enough to walk on, and gently sloping, and ahead he could see the waving fronds of fernpear trees.

He crawled onto the bank and began to walk.

Fifty paces from the dark, inviting jungle, he came across four wooden statues, each about the size of himself, carved from tree-trunks. They were very old, standing at odd angles, half rotted, made to resemble little squatting men with big heads.

Beyond them was a town. Or rather, the remains of a town. The roofs of the enormous buildings had caved in, and creeping vines covered their skeletons.

At another time, that might interest him. Not now. All he cared about was food.

He took three more steps, and one of the statues spoke to him. It didn't move its rotted wooden lips, but the words appeared just inside his ear, like a bee buzzing there.

You are not Talehau, the voice whirred.

"Sure I am," Fool Wolf asserted.

No. We know the lineages, and you are not of them.

"All I want is some food from the forest."

You might be a pirate. You might be a thief. You have a powerful spirit in you. We will not let you enter Lehau.

"The village? Look behind you! They are all dead! You guard nothing!"

No, the statue replied. *One remains. As long as one remains, we guard.*

Fool Wolf gritted his teeth. The woman! That damned woman again!

"I ignore you now," he told the statues, and strode briskly past them.

He came to in the river, his limbs twitching like dying eels, sparks dancing before his eyes. With a horrible start, he realized that he was fetched up against the log, about to float over it and back down the waterfall.

He flopped back onto the bank.

"Okay," he panted to Chugaachik. "Okay. Help me. Do whatever you want."

For the first time since he was a boy, he got no answer, not even a purr or a growl.

His heart did a strange twist in his breast. Was he finally rid of her? For years he had been fleeing the consequences of Chugaachik's actions and searching for a shaman powerful enough to release the goddess from his body. How ironic it would be to be free now, just before starving to death.

He trudged back up the slope to confront the statues again.

You are not Talehau, they reminded him.

"No. But I mean no harm. I just need food. Can't I just walk inland for a little while, if I promise to come right back out?"

No.

Fool Wolf felt dizzy. There must be some way to argue with these intractable gods, but he needed rest before he thought of it. Now that he was up here, he certainly wasn't going back down.

He awoke, then scrambled wildly away from the snake nudging him in the side.Only it wasn't a snake, he saw, as the foolish colors of sleep leaked from his eyes. It was a long piece of bamboo, and holding the other end of it was the woman.

The sight of her knocked the breath right out of him. She was crouched down, just beyond the guardian gods. She had wrapped some sort of kilt around her waist, but it didn't conceal much of her. And he could see her eyes now. They were the color the smoke would be if you could burn jade.

"Hello," he said softly. "It's nice to see you again."

She didn't answer, but she let the stick drop. Maybe she had been wondering if he was dead.

"I need a favor," Fool Wolf said, carefully. "Something to eat. Could you do that for me?" He pantomimed chewing, then thumped his belly. It thudded like a shaman's drum.

She watched him as he repeated himself in several languages, then got up and swayed off into the forest. He watched her long, shapely legs and thought of them crisped over a fire and served with rice.

Fool Wolf folded back down by the statues.

"Will you answer some questions?" He asked the guardians wearily.

Yes.

"Of all the people you once guarded, only one is still alive?"

True. Save for one, the Talehau are no more.

"What happened to them?"

My brothers and I were tree spirits. Long ago, when the Talehau first arrived here, we struck a bargain with them. They would refrain from cutting trees—beyond a certain allotted number—and we would guard them from enemies. We could not protect them from

themselves, however. The tattooed Python King, whose island this is, fell in love with a woman of the village and took her to live with him. Her brother, Mahan, a proud and jealous man, heard of this. He sought his sister for months. When he found her, she told him she loved the Python King. The brother, who desired his sister, swore that if he could not have her, no one should. So Mahan killed her, to spite the King. In his rage, the Python King slew everyone on the island—all but one, for he wanted one to carry the memory of what had happened. Then he swore enmity to Humans and put the tapu around the island.

Fool Wolf tried to absorb all of that. There were a lot of questions there, but what was most important right now was getting past the guardians.

"Ah—when the Talehau had visitors from other islands—not pirates, just visitors—did you let them pass?"

Of course. If they were greeted by the Talehau or the gods of this island—if we could be sure they were guests, you see, and not interlopers.

"I see. Well—I'm harmless enough. I'm sure you can see that. And you are gods. Can't you invite me in?"

It is against our bargain to do so, of course.

"Of course."

But he could get her to invite him in. If she could talk, which he had seen no evidence of.

"How long ago was Lehau abandoned?"

Twenty years ago.

Fool Wolf nodded. The woman didn't look a sliver-moon over twenty-five. If she had been alone since the age of five and hadn't spoken to another human being since then, maybe she couldn't talk at all.

But maybe she could, or he could teach her.

So he took a bath. It wasn't easy—he was weak, and the current, though not strong by any normal standards, was too rapid for him. He dipped water out with his hands, then lay on the bank, ducking his head under, working the salty tangles in his hair out with his fingers.

He threw away the remains of his robe. Maybe, if she could see his wasting body, she would feel sorry for him. Or, if she had never seen a man before, perhaps she would be curious. If she came back.

And she did come back, near sundown, with a heavy netted bag. His heart thudded with glee as brightly colored fruit, steaming banana-leaf bundles, and a dead chicken spilled onto the ground. The woman set about gathering wood for a fire as Fool Wolf licked his lips.

"I can help you with that, if you just invite me over," He called. "Weak as I am, I would be glad to do the work of building a fire."

She gave no indication that she heard him.

"Very well—I understand. You have no reason to trust me. But you must like me—see, you brought me food. It's very nice of you to cook, but I wonder if I could have some of the fruit now?"

He might have been talking to the sea.

Soon he was panting like a dog at the scent of the bird roasting on a spit. He had never smelled anything better.

In front of him, she ate every bit of the food. When she was done, she considered the bird carcass, picked off what remained of the meat, and tossed the bones at Fool Wolf. Then she threw the rinds of the fruit at him too.

"You bitch!" Fool Wolf shrieked, pouncing on the remains.

He ate the rinds, though they were bitter. He ate the bones, too, smashing them and sucking out what remained of the marrow.

An hour later, he threw it up, and for the first time she made a sound.

She laughed, then walked away again.

She repeated her performance the next day, and the next. By the fourth day he didn't even bother to stir—it was a waste of energy.

"I wonder why you do this to me," Fool Wolf said. "I wonder how you can hate me so, when I have done you no harm." He watched her tear a drumstick from a chicken and take a large bite. He could hear the skin crackle, see the grease dribble down her beautiful chin.

"But you can't even understand me, can you? You're just like some poor dumb beast."

"No," she said, in Jara, or a language very like it. "I can talk."

"Then why—"

"I have little to say to you. You came here to kill me, yes? My father always said someone would."

"Not me. I'm just a castaway."

"Yes, from the boat the Python King destroyed. The one that violated the tapu."

"I know nothing of this. I was just a passenger, and an unwilling one at that."

"I don't believe you."

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Why do you want to know?"

"Because you are the loveliest woman I have ever seen. Because if you are going to kill me, you at least owe me the name of my murderer, so I can tell it to my ancestors."

"Names are too important for me to give you mine. And you murdered yourself by coming here. It isn't my fault." She smiled, faintly. "You came for the Python King's treasure, didn't you?"

"I heard my captors mention that, yes."

"I am the Python King's treasure. So you came to kill or kidnap me. You see? I do have something against

"I have little to say to you. You came here to kill me, yes? My father always said someone would."

you. You aren't the first, you know." She tossed another cleaned carcass over the tapu line. It was difficult, but he ignored it.

"You are undeniably a treasure," Fool Wolf said, "but I did not come here for you. Though allow me to say—if you were mine, and not this Python King's, I would treasure you indeed. I have been to fabulous Nhol and ancient Lhe, to Rumq Qaj, Palipurn, and Fanva. I have seen the great mountain in Balati and the high plains of Falling Sky. I have walked most of this world, yet I have never seen any jewel or star as beautiful as your eyes. I have known many women, but next to you even the loveliest might as well have been a man. And now that I have heard you speak, no harp or flute—"

She was smiling, a fascinated little smile. "How long can you keep that up?" She asked.

"I could praise your beauty to the end of my days," he answered. "Unfortunately, that won't be in the very distant future."

"Hmm." She considered that for a moment, then rolled a whitemelon toward him. It stopped just inside the tapu line—on his side. He stared at it, shaking, fearing a trick.

"Go on," she said. "You've pleased me."

He took the melon and split it open. The smell of the sweet white meat nearly overpowered him.

He gobbled it down and wiped his mouth. "May I have another?" He asked.

"Talk to me a little more, and you may."

"Your thighs are like—"

"No. Not about me. I know what I look like. Tell me more about those places. Those cities and such."

"Oh. Well—there's Nhol, Nhol of the white pyramids, which gleam in the sun as if they were made of eggshells ..."

A week later, he was starting to feel less hungry. His flesh was beginning to gain substance again, though she was still miserly with what she gave him.

"Why don't you invite me over there?" He asked. "You must know by now I wouldn't hurt you."

"I know from your stories you are a thief and a liar," she said.

"I never said any such thing."

"No. You dance around it, but it's always there. You are a faithless and fickle man, Fool Wolf. How can I trust you?"

"Because I've changed. My love for you has changed me."

She laughed. "You love me no more than you have ever loved any woman, I'll guess. You do like the look of me, I think, but then that isn't love, is it?"

"What would you know about it? Have you ever even known a man?"

"Others have been where you are now. All were faithless."

A little chill bristled across his scalp. "I am not them."

"I've heard stories, too."

"From who?"

She shrugged. "I hear stories. That's all."

She tossed him a packet of steamed breadfruit and was silent while he devoured it.

"Tell me," she said. "If I allowed it, what would you do, if I let you come over here? If I let you love me?"

He looked up at that, at her supple, gleaming limbs, at the swell of her breasts. "That's cruel," Fool Wolf said. "That's worse than making me watch you eat when I'm starving."

"No it isn't. Or would you like to compare? I can always stop feeding you."

"No!" he said quickly. "No! I—ah—don't you want to hear more about my travels?"

"No. I want to hear the other now."

He put away the remains of the breadfruit and crept as near the tapu boundary as he could. He fixed his eyes on her.

"Well," he murmured, reaching his hand up, as if to touch her, "I would first caress your arms with the tips of my fingers, until little bumps rose up on them. And then ..."

That night he lay awake, unable to sleep. He was getting used to the strange night noises of the island, but his mind was working and would not let him rest.

He'd almost had her, today. He could see it in her eyes. Soon she would invite him across. Then he could start thinking about building a boat. Maybe there were old maps in the ruined village.

He shook that off—it was too many steps down the road. For now, the goal was much simpler—to not have to depend on her for his life.

He shifted his eyes at a slight sound, saw a shadow gliding.

She was about ten paces from him, a ghost in the moonlight. He kept very still.

"Listen to me," she said. "I still haven't invited you over the tapu line. If you hurt me, or kill me, you will starve here. Do you understand that? There is no one else to care for you."

"I would not hurt you," Fool Wolf replied.

"Good. Then I want—I want some of those things you talked about."

"Really? And then you will invite me over?"

"I promise nothing. But maybe."

"Come here, then," Fool Wolf said, "and you will see that I make good on my promises." He reached for her leg, and stroked along the inner calf. She made an odd sound, and after a moment, her knees buckled, and she knelt next to him.

He pressed his face into the hollow of her neck, and his face and belly prickled at the scent of her skin.

"My name is Inah," she murmured.

After that, she made more odd sounds. Many more.

One more awakening, one more rude surprise. This one was a sharp kick in the ribs and a curse. Fool Wolf opened his eyes in time to see Inah flee back over the tapu line.

"Liar!" She shrieked.

"What?" Fool Wolf yelped, staggering to his feet and clutching his aching flank. "What did I do?"

She lifted her chin and pointed with it. "Your friends are here," she said.

He turned. Beyond the waterfall, in the slice of ocean he could see, was a large boat, very much like the boat he had come on.

Prince Fa, or more of his men. Inside the tapu.

"No!" He shouted. "They are my enemies, too. Invite me over! Don't leave me out here!"

For an instant she seemed to consider it, then tossed her black mane contemptuously. "You almost tricked me," she said. Then she vanished into the jungle.

"I've been waiting for you," Fool Wolf said.

Prince Fa did not look happy. None of the two-score soldiers with him looked happy, either.

"Have you." The Prince said, frostily. "What happened to my other ship? And Kreth, and the others?"

"The tapu got them."

"But it didn't get you, the sorcerer who was supposed to deal with it. How coincidental. Have you secured the treasure yet?"

Fool Wolf remembered the night, the fierce tangling of limbs. "In a manner of speaking."

"Where is she, then?"

"I don't know."

The Prince smiled, very narrowly. "Things aren't going well for you, whoever you are. Lohar's body was found, you know, which reveals you as a fraud. Your lies have lost me a good ship and some very good men. You may remember, too, what I said about having to take a hand in matters myself. It cost me more than I care to say to quiet the Python King and his tapu. Even so, he won't stay quiet for long. So where is she?"

"If I knew, I would tell you. She ran into the jungle when you came."

Fa cocked his head. "But she was here? You talked to her?" His face transfigured, slightly. "Oh, I see. More than that. Well. You shall live a little longer then." He signed to his men. "Bind his hands but leave his feet free."

A heavyset thug lashed Fool Wolf's hands together with leather straps. Meanwhile, Prince Fa approached the sentinel statues. Fool Wolf braced himself. When the Prince collapsed, he would take advantage of the confusion and flee back to the beach. If he could swim out to the ship, defeat whoever was on board ...

He needed Chugaachik now, but he was beginning to think she was really gone.

The prince wandered beyond the sentinels. He turned and looked at his soldiers and Fool Wolf. "It's safe," he said. "All of you come with me."

They didn't go far. In the old square of the ruined village, Fa's men cleared the jungle growth and then, at the edge of the clearing, they hung Fool Wolf between two trees. They built a fire and amused themselves by searing his flesh with brands.

Fool Wolf was Mang by birth—his people were fierce horsemen who raised their children to expect and endure torture.

Fool Wolf had never been a very good Mang, and he was weak already. After a time, he screamed, and screamed again. When they thought he had screamed enough, they cut him down, bound him to one of the trees, and made camp some distance away.

Fool Wolf watched the moon rise.

"Chugaachik?" He whispered. "Are you really gone?"

He got no answer. He watched the moon set.

And with the largest eyes of heaven closed, Inah came.

"What have they done to you?" She whispered.

"Go away," he said. "This is what they want. They want you to try to help me."

"I'm sorry I didn't believe you," she said. Her fingers traced upon his face, and he could just make out her eyes.

"Inah, *run*."

"They cannot stop me. You don't know everything about me. I ..." her voice stumbled, and she made a little choking noise. "What?" She gasped. She sounded confused. Then she slid against Fool Wolf, across his burned flesh, and fell in a heap at his feet.

> "They cannot stop me. You don't know everything about me...."

"Well!" Prince Fa's voice came out of the darkness. "Congratulations! You proved useful after all."

"I'm going to kill you, Fa," Fool Wolf said.

"Of course you are."

"What did you do to her?"

"An extract of the poison of the Hutoew tree. She will live."

"Why? What do you want from her?"

Fa's face appeared in a little glow of witchlight from something in his hand. Fool Wolf looked down and saw Inah: She had two small darts in her neck. Her eyes were open, glassy.

"At first I just wanted *her*. Now, I want something more. I suppose I should thank you for forcing me to come here, to conquer my fears. Yes, my fears! I had not realized how powerful I have become. So I will allow you to live a while, and let you dream of killing me. Such dreams are sweet, are they not? It is my reward to you, to see me fulfill mine." He turned to his men, who had been gathering behind him.

"Bind her, and complete the circle around them."

"Aren't we going, now that we have her?" One of the men asked.

"No," Fa said. "We await one more."

Fool Wolf sought for Chugaachik one last time, knowing that if he did not find her he would die, and so would Inah. Of course, if he did find Chugaachik, Inah might die anyway. Chugaachik did not treat Fool Wolf's lovers well, generally.

Fool Wolf's father had wanted him to be a gaan, a shaman. That was how Fool Wolf had ended up with a goddess living in him. And though he had long ago abandoned his father's

path for him, he still had enough training to set his spirit drifting into the world-beneath-the-surface-of-the-world, the world of spirit.

He went about aimlessly, at first, in the dark counterpart of the island. He walked hard beaten paths where the gaunt dead roamed in circles.

It might have been days or ten heartbeats of wandering before he found the guardians, but find them he finally did. Here they were four old men, balding and bearded, with flesh like knotted wood. They watched him approach with little half-smiles.

"Hello again," one said.

"Hello, grandfathers. I'm looking for something."

"That being?"

"The goddess that accompanied me to the island."

"Ah. She is with the Python King. She fled your body when we touched you. The King found her before she could return."

"And where is he? The Python King?"

They sent him through a forest of wailing trees and dark, scurrying things, through a marsh where slender cranes that looked liked wrought iron fished for souls, and at last to a high peak with a bowl-shaped valley at the top. All along the rim were the remains of shrines, low platforms with small standing stones. Clustered around the shrines, like ants around fruit, were Human ghosts, sitting with their heads between their knees, some weeping. One looked up at Fool Wolf with eyes like the empty space in a chrysalis, once the moth is gone.

"Help me," the ghost said.

Fool Wolf uttered a single, bitter laugh and continued on. But he thought he heard something, now. A faint voice, speaking his name. He tried to follow the sound, but it never seemed to get any louder or softer, and he could never be certain that it really was his name.

Until the melodic baritone suddenly spoke it right in his ear.

"Fool Wolf, I suppose?"

He turned. The speaker was a handsome man of middle years, densely muscled. He wore a crimson sarong, but the rest of his dark body was clothed only in tattoos, the mottled spots of a python.

"And you are the Python King?"

"That is one of my names. I expected to see you sooner."

"Prince Fa said he had put you to sleep."

The Python King blinked as if waking from a dream. "Fa? Fa? He is not that powerful. But Fa is not his name, and he has hidden his name from me. Hiding that, he has hidden himself. I cannot see him or even long hold the thought of him before me. Now he is calling me, and I am compelled to go into his trap. I will forget as I go. I fear he will kill me then, and you, and take Inah away."

"There is nothing you can do? They say you made this island. You must have more power than that."

The Python King shrugged and clasped his hands behind his back. "An island is a small thing, really. And in those days creating was easier. I have lived here too long, forgotten too much. This man—you see, I cannot even remember what you called him, now—he has studied arts unknown in my day. I do not ken them."

"Fa. His name is Fa. He came here to steal your treasure and to kill you."

"And so he shall. And his name is not Fa."

Fool Wolf sighed. "You have something of mine."

"Oh, yes," the Python king said. "Her. Do you really want her back?"

"No. But I think I have no other choice."

"I suppose you don't. Though I suspect that she won't be able to help, much." Behind him a jackal stalked out of the forest. A gray jackal mottled black, the size of a horse, with red carbuncle eyes.

"Hello, sweet thing," Chugaachik said. "You missed me."

Fool Wolf ignored her. "Can you put her back in me? Back in my Mansion of Bone?"

The Python King looked at him for a moment, then reached for Chugaachik. He lifted her by the scruff of the neck and shook her once, hard, so that she became a long pelt. He rolled her up and squeezed her into a small, black jewel.

"Swallow it," the god told him. "Or not. I have to go now. Someone is calling me."

"Prince Fa?"

"I only know I must go."

The god lifted and flowed, a sinuous smoke, a great snake in the sky. Fool Wolf caught his tail and went with him.

Soon he saw the clearing, and his body, and Inah.

He lifted the jewel to his mouth and paused. Wouldn't it be better to die than to have Chugaachik in him again?

No.

He swallowed the jewel and smelled a sharp tang like wet metal or a bloody nose. He felt scratching, like a spider beneath his tongue. And, of course, her laughter, shrill, and a surge of desire that was only a little like lust for a woman.

He woke to his flesh.

But it wasn't his flesh for long.

He was still bound, but a grin stretched itself from ear to ear. His teeth felt like obsidian knives. His fingers were talons. And the rope that bound him—rotten string.

Prince Fa stood before him, seemingly oblivious to the changes working in Fool Wolf.

"Well," the Prince said, beaming, waving a curved, bloody sword. "You awake just in time. See who I have before me." He gestured. A huge python, the length of thirty men, lay near where Inah hung. Its head was hacked halfway off, but it was still alive, writhing, golden blood bubbling from its nostrils.

"He doesn't even know I'm here," Fa said, his voice full of delight.

Chugaachik chuckled, and it came out of Fool Wolf's mouth. *Let me have him,* she demanded.

Not yet, Fool Wolf told her. *He might be too much even for you. Just wait a bit, and I promise you—*

You will not cheat me again, the goddess said.

I surely will. But not this time. This time, I need you.

Fa had turned his attention back to the great snake, and lifted his sword to strike again.

"I bet he would recognize you if I told him your name," Fool Wolf said.

Fa stopped, glanced at him, and for an instant, Fool Wolf saw fear there. Fa pointed the sword at him. "Shut up," he said.

Something clamped upon Fool Wolf's vocal cords. Fa stepped forward and raised the sword for a blow that would decapitate Fool Wolf. "Just in case you *do* know," Fa said.

Now, he told Chugaachik.

Now? Chugaachik screamed. *You idiot!* Black lightning uncoiled. And as he lost his voice, and his limbs, and his mind to the goddess and her desires, he shouted to the Python King.

"*Mahan!*" He told the god. "His name is Mahan!"

Then Fa's blade struck him. Chugaachik had managed, in that less than a heartbeat, to snap the bonds and bring his arms up. The blade sank through flesh and shattered the bone of his right forearm, allowing the blade to bite into the side of his neck. Something splashed wetly on his shoulder.

Fool Wolf snarled.

Fa's eyes widened, and he swung again, shouting something at the same moment. Fool Wolf lunged at him but met with a peculiar slipperiness. His claws would not catch—it was as if the Prince were made of glass.

And the sword hit him again, this time crunching its way through several ribs. Fool Wolf screamed, a scream of pure fury, and looked up into the deathblow dropping toward his face.

At that moment a great coil engulfed Fa. His surprised look was suddenly hidden by another coil whipping around to the top of that one, and then the head of a great serpent, darted down, teeth gleaming.

Fa had men. Some were running, while others were coming forward to help their master. All moved as if walking through syrup.

Blood pumping from his arms, neck and side, Fool Wolf launched himself at them. Their terror was sweet, but not as sweet as their blood. He eviscerated every one.

Then he turned on Inah, full of joy and anticipation.

He slipped in blood, and to his disgust found that he did not have the strength to get up. The small part of him that was really Fool Wolf rejoiced.

You still owe me! Chugaachik howled, somewhere. *You did trick me! You almost let him kill us!*

You had your way with his men. Be satisfied with that. "Be satisfied that we're still alive," he finished, aloud.

"A gift from my father," another voice said. Inah, who was wiping his forehead with a damp cloth. He lay on a barkcloth mat in a dimly lit hut.

"The Python King. Your father."

"Yes, of course. He mended the worst of your wounds, made water into blood for you." She bent over and kissed him. "I'm sorry for the way I treated you. If I had known you would save my life—and my father's life—I would have been much nicer from the beginning. But I thought you were *him*."

"Fa? Mahan? The man who killed your mother?"

"Did he?" she wrinkled her brow. "Father told me only that he let one villager live, and that it was a man. He didn't say who it was. How did you know?"

"I guessed. All along I thought you were the last villager, the one the Python King let live. But you aren't. You aren't even human."

"I'm half human. I seemed human enough the other night, didn't I? You didn't know, then."

"No. But you are of your father's lineage, not of the village. It was only when Fa—Mahan—passed the guardians without even a struggle that I understood. Who better to remember the crime than the criminal?" He shook his head. "A mistake. Gods are too fond of poetics and curses. This irony turned itself on your father. It almost killed him." A sudden thought occurred. "Fa's boat—what happened to it?"

> "A mistake. Gods are too fond of poetics and curses."

"Don't worry. It's still out there. Father kept it for you, and he let two of the sailors live, as well. We will have a way to other lands."

"We?"

She kissed him again. It tingled on his lips. Did he taste snake? A faint musk?

"Never fear," she murmured. "I'm fond of you, Fool Wolf, but I'm not going attached to you, in hopes of a husband and children. That isn't what I want. But I will see more of the world. I've become bored with this island." She scratched him behind the ear. "Anyway, I think you will need my help for a little while, yes?"

"I won't argue with an offer like that," Fool Wolf told her, smiling.

All in all, it seemed the best idea to agree with everything she said, at least until he could walk again.

Greg Keyes found inspiration for this story while visiting Malaysia, where snake gods are not at all uncommon. His new novel, Empire of Unreason, will be published by Del Rey in May.

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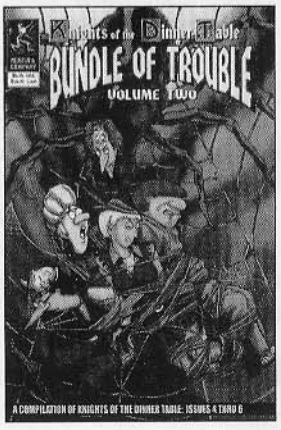

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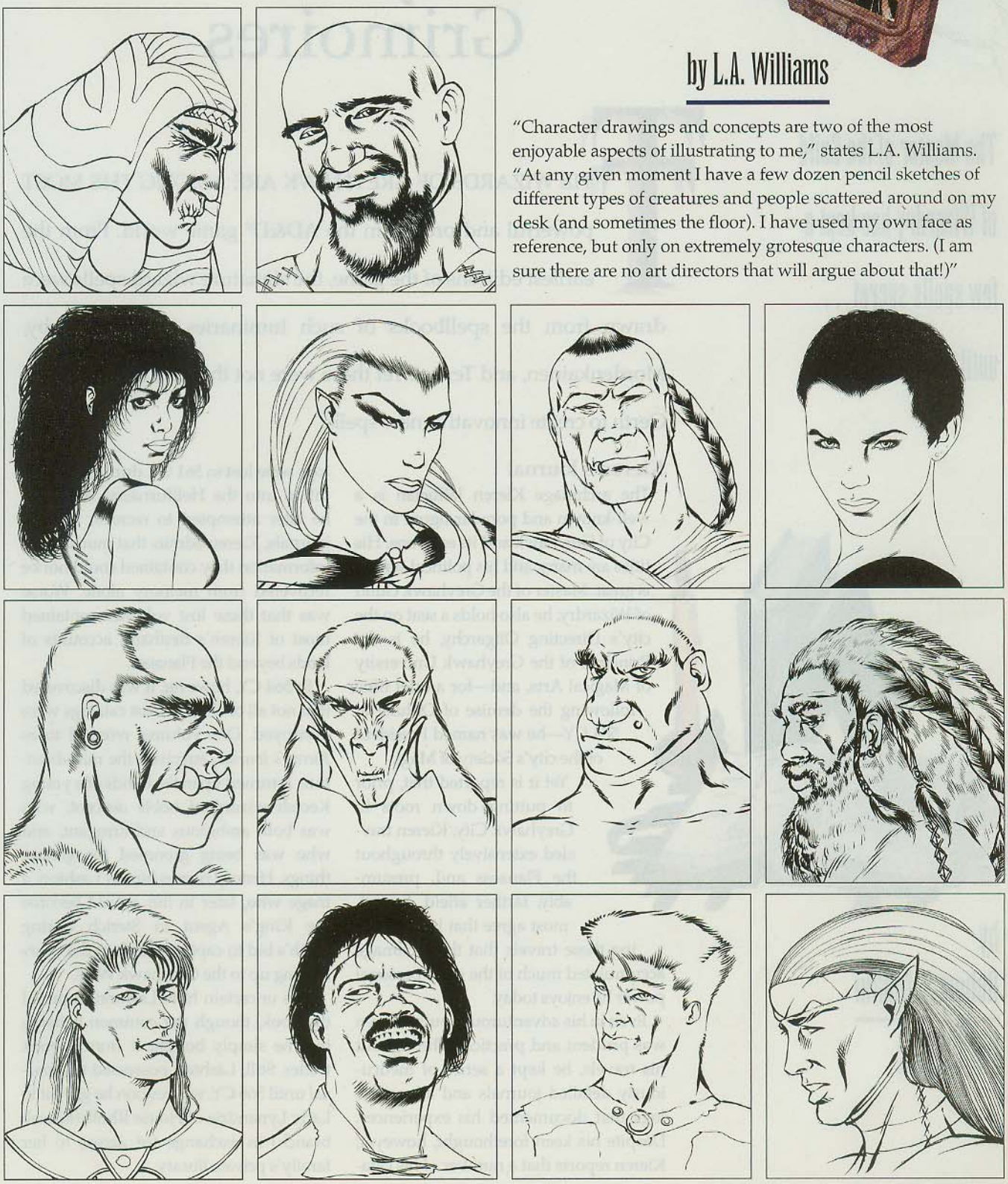
NPCs

PC Portraits

by L.A. Williams

"Character drawings and concepts are two of the most enjoyable aspects of illustrating to me," states L.A. Williams. "At any given moment I have a few dozen pencil sketches of different types of creatures and people scattered around on my desk (and sometimes the floor). I have used my own face as reference, but only on extremely grotesque characters. (I am sure there are no art directors that will argue about that!)"



Greyhawk Grimoires

The Master of the Guild of Wizardry has kept a few spells secret ... until now.

by Robert S. Mullin

illustrated by L.A. Williams

THE WIZARDS OF GREYHAWK ARE AMONG THE MOST powerful and prolific in the AD&D® game world. From the earliest editions of the game, the signature wizard spells were drawn from the spellbooks of such luminaries as Rary, Bigby, Mordenkainen, and Tenser. Yet these were not the only archmages of Oerth to create innovative new spells.

Kieren's Journal

The archmage Kieren Jallucian is a well-known and popular figure in the City of Greyhawk and its environs. His titles are many, and his political station is great. Master of the Greyhawk Guild of Wizardry, he also holds a seat on the city's Directing Oligarchy, he is the Principal of the Greyhawk University of Magical Arts, and—for a brief time following the demise of Otiluke in 584 CY—he was named President of the city's Society of Magi.

Yet it is reported that, prior to putting down roots in Greyhawk City, Kieren traveled extensively throughout the Flanaess and, presumably, farther afield. In fact, most agree that is was during these travels that the archmage accumulated much of the great personal power he enjoys today.

Even in his adventurous youth, Kieren was prudent and practical. Throughout his travels, he kept a series of meticulously detailed journals and adventure logs that documented his experiences. Despite his keen forethought, however, Kieren reports that a number of his catalogs were lost in 561 CY, during an expedition into the Hellfurnaces. Although he later attempted to recreate the lost journals, Kieren admits that much of the information they contained could not be recovered from memory alone. Worse was that these lost volumes contained most of Kieren's firsthand accounts of lands beyond the Flanaess.

In 564 CY, however, it was discovered that not all of Kieren's lost catalogs were destroyed. One volume, referred to as *Kieren's Journal*, survived the misadventure. It turned up in the hands of a young Keoish wizard of noble descent, who was both ambitious and arrogant, and who was being groomed for greater things. History names him as Lashton, a mage who, later in life, would become the King's Agent in Sterich during Lolth's bid to capture Oerth in the years leading up to the Greyhawk Wars.

It is uncertain how Lashton acquired the book, though the common belief is that he simply bought it from a book trader. Still, Lashton possessed the *Journal* until 566 CY, whereupon he gave it to Lady Lynandria of House Rhola (Keoish branch) in exchange for access to her family's private library.

Lady Lynandria—rumored to be a mere dabbler in magic but possessed of superior oracular talents—owned the *Journal* less than a season before ordering a servant to remove it from her household. Apparently, the noblewoman experienced a series of "visions" indicating that death surrounded the book—thus, her willingness to part with it.

It seems that Lady Lynandria's prediction could not have been more accurate, for the servant charged with disposing of the book—thinking he could make a few coins for himself by selling it—was slain that day by unknown assailants while on his way to a book dealer. Needless to say, when the servant's body was discovered, the *Journal* was gone.

Kieren's Journal next surfaced in 569 CY, plucked from a wizard's corpse at the Battle of Emridy Meadows—the skirmish in which a united force of humans and demihumans scattered the Horde of Elemental Evil. At this point, however, the *Journal's* trail becomes sketchy, for there are conflicting reports regarding its eventual whereabouts.

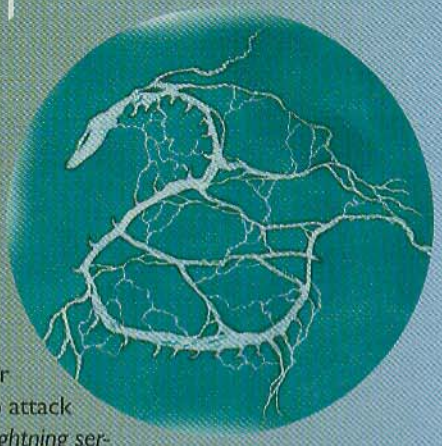
One report claims that the book was taken to Veluna City, while another says Verbobonc. A third report suggests that it was claimed by the elves and carried back to Celene. To this day, however, the truth of the matter remains a mystery, for none of the reports could be confirmed or excluded, and the *Journal* vanished for a time thereafter.

The *Journal's* next appearance was in 576 CY, in the island city of Admundfort. The owner, one Akastilan by name and a mage known to wander the lands bordering the Nyr Dyv, claimed to have acquired the *Journal* a year previously, following a great spell battle in the Cairn Hills. Akastilan was (and still is) known for his great exaggerations, and likely he simply wrested it from a simple hedge wizard or minor mageling who happened to possess the *Journal* at the time.

Nevertheless, Akastilan carried the *Journal* east into the Urnst states, where he promptly traded it to an unnamed individual. Although Akastilan's compensation remains undisclosed, his presence at several notable political functions shortly thereafter suggests his anonymous partner was a person of some influence.

Lightning Serpent

(Evocation)
Level: Wizard 1
Range: 10'/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: ½



When this spell is invoked, the caster brings into existence a crackling field of electricity that adopts a snakelike shape. Thereafter, the caster can command the *lightning serpent* to attack any one creature within range. The *lightning serpent* attacks with the caster's THAC0, inflicting 1d6 points of electrical damage with each successful "bite." A successful saving throw vs. spell reduces this damage by half (rounded up), but each strike requires a separate saving throw, with success or failure applying only to the strike in question.

Once the caster directs the *lightning serpent* to attack, he or she is free to engage in other activities, although changing the *serpent's* target requires the caster's total concentration for that round. Otherwise, the *serpent* continues to attack the chosen target for the full spell duration, even if that target is slain before the spell's expiration.

The *lightning serpent* cannot be attacked physically in return, but it can be negated prematurely with a successful *dispel magic* or similar effect. Likewise, it can be repelled or reduced in effectiveness by the appropriate defensive measures (such as electrical or lightning immunity, *protection from lightning*, and so on).

Although electrical in composition, a *lightning serpent* does not generate sufficient heat to ignite flammable substances, nor does its energy conduct through objects or materials that are not carried or worn by its intended target.

The material components for this spell are a snake bone and a copper or silver coin (or the equivalent weight in unworked metal). Both the bone and metal are consumed in the casting.

Those who have managed to track the *Journal's* path through history generally assume it still resides in one of the Urnst states, for there have been no reported sightings elsewhere since leaving Akastilan's hands. Time will tell whether it remains this way, of course.

As an aside, it is now known that Kieren Jallucian has been aware of the *Journal's* existence for some time, though he assures would-be owners that he has no wish to reclaim it, having written it off long ago. However, he has made subtle remarks to the effect that he wouldn't mind the opportunity to flip through its pages one last time, if only for sentimental reasons.

Appearance

According to Kieren, the *Journal* has a curious appearance. At first glance, it looks more like a leather satchel or handbag than a book.

Measuring roughly 2 feet long, 18 inches wide, and 6 inches thick, the wooden covers and spine are encased in a layer of heavy, hardened, reddish brown leather. (Akastilan claims that the leather is, in fact, red dragonskin, at which report Kieren simply shakes his head and chuckles.) This leather extends beyond the page edges of both covers, forming flaps that conceal the book's pages. Attached to the flaps are a series of silver buckles—two on each short

Kieren's Curse Ward

(Abjuration, Divination)
Level: Wizard 6
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Caster
Saving Throw: None

This potent magic renders the caster immune to the effects of nearly all forms of curses, from spells and spell-like effects to the inherent powers of certain baneful magical items.

While the *curse ward* is in effect, the caster can handle cursed items (both magical and mundane) without fear of contracting a curse. In fact, if the caster even touches a cursed scroll, the scroll immediately crumbles to dust and is no longer dangerous.

Similarly, if the caster is already under the influence of a cursed item (such as a *ring of clumsiness*, *jewel of attacks*, cursed weapons, and so on), the link is instantly broken, and the item can be discarded. Likewise, the caster immediately recognizes the item for what it truly is and knows to be rid of it. Note, however, that this spell does not remove the curse on the item itself—that is, if the spell ends and the caster is in contact with the item, the curse reestablishes itself as usual.

Curses produced by spells or spell-like effects (such as *bestow curse*, a hag covey's curse power, and so on) automatically fail to affect a warded mage. The same holds true if the curse is produced by a magical device. If the caster is already suffering from a curse conveyed by a spell or spell-like power when the *curse ward* is cast, the curse is rendered inert for the spell's duration, and the caster will know that the curse exists. If the curse is not removed before the *curse ward* expires, however, it immediately reasserts its influence on the caster when the spell ends. If the curse in question initially permitted a saving throw to resist its effects, the caster receives a new saving throw when the *curse ward* expires.

Cursed areas (such as burial grounds, tombs, and crypts, among others) should be treated as a spell or magical item, as appropriate to the situation.

This spell offers no protection against the curses that often accompany an artifact or relic, unless the curse normally allows a saving throw, in which case, the *curse ward* improves the caster's saving throw by +2.

Although lycanthropy, vampirism, and similar afflictions are often regarded as curses, the *curse ward* does not protect the caster from them, as these afflictions function more like transmitted diseases. However, if such afflictions are transmitted via a cursed item, spell, or the like (as opposed to an attack by the creature normally associated with the affliction in question), the spell protects the caster or temporarily break the curse if it is already influencing the caster, as described above.

Kieren's curse ward is not susceptible to *dispel magic* or similar effects, but it can be negated early with a *wish* or *limited wish* spell.

The material component for this spell is a flawless peridot worth at least 500 gp value that must have a different protective rune etched on each facet (a process that costs an additional 2,000 gp). When the spell ends, the gem shatters and is consumed.

edge, four on the long edge—that secure the flaps in place, thus protecting the *Journal's* interior from the elements. Finally, between the two central buckle-mounts on the book's long edge, two thick leather straps are attached directly to the covers, one on each side, and serve as handles for easy transport.

The *Journal* has no other obvious external embellishments or decorations, though Kieren assumes that, over the years since he lost it, the book probably has become more battered and worn.

As far as its interior is concerned, Kieren notes that the pages, though not of the best available parchment, are of sufficient quality to retain spell inscriptions and the like.

Contents

Kieren points out that his various adventure journals primarily consist of commentary and observations about the various cultures he encountered during his travels. This particular volume focuses on his experiences in the mysterious Amedio Jungle and the so-called savages who dwell therein.

According to Kieren's observations, not every Amedio tribe is hostile to outsiders and, in fact, some are quite friendly to visitors who come in peace. Several pages describe how one tribe even took him on a tour of an ancient Olman ruin, leading to his discovery of a lost spell. Although the original was etched into the surface of an immovable stone slab, the *Journal* contains a reproduction. The spell, called *lightning serpent*, is one of only two spells inscribed in the *Journal*, though both are unique. The other, *Kieren's curse ward*, is clearly of Kieren's own devising.

In any event, *Kieren's Journal* is an invaluable source of information for those who would learn more about the Amedio Jungle and its people. It is up to the DM to decide just how much information is present, however, as well as its accuracy.

Robert would like to dedicate this article to Gary Holian, Fred Wiening, and Russ Taylor for their undying support of the "Greyhawk Grimoires" series.

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Power at a Price

It's not a bug, it's a feature. Make the most of magical treasures that have a few minor drawbacks.

by Simon Horton

illustrated by Shawn Sharp

TARGON KNELT BY THE HEAPS OF COINS AND GEMS that littered the cave's floor. Besting the dragon had been the hardest battle of his life. Goblets set with rubies and swords with hilts of silver sheathed in exotic hides were but trinkets compared to the other marvels of this chamber. The torches he lit sputtered and danced, and in the wavering light Targon caught a glimpse of an odd-looking bowl. He scooped it up, letting the coins inside fall atop the heap. It was then that he realized it was no bowl.

The object was made of a metal that Targon had never before beheld. It was the color of burnished copper and shaped like the head of an ant, only large enough to fit his own head. Two orblike eyes bulged out, and twin mandibles clenched tightly together at the front. Targon guessed it was some sort of helm. Curious, he slipped it over his head.

He felt the metal shift and the hole tighten around his neck. His face felt like it was being pulled apart, and he screamed in agony as his flesh filled the cavity's every curve. From the helm more of the copper substance began to spill over him.

A metallic shell took form around him. It became flexible plates and joints. Again his flesh was tugged into every curve of the suit. When he tried to scream, the mandibles opened wide, and a high-pitched screech shattered the silence of the cavelike glass.

Most magical items in the AD&D game fall into one of two categories: those that are beneficial to the wielder and those that are cursed. The following enchanted tools form a new category of objects that grant awesome powers at an inescapable cost. While their power is arguably too great, in the hands of creative players they can create fabulous stories and unique roleplaying opportunities. If the DM chooses not to give them to PCs, then these magical items can make a foe particularly challenging, even for high-level heroes.

Chitin Helm

This magical *helm* is shaped like the head of an ant and crafted from a light metallic substance that resembles copper. There are no seams on the *helm*; it appears to be all one piece. Two round eyes bulge out on either side of a ridge that runs from the top of the *helm* to the mouth where two mandibles clasp.

When the *helm* is placed over a character's head, it immediately clamps on, and the *helm's* enchantment molds the wearer's flesh to fit inside the insect *helm*.

As the head is fit, the *helm* creates enough copper material to cover the recipient's entire body. All nonmagical items on the wearer's body are quickly dissolved by a thin film of acid on the inside of the suit, which is intended to remove the outer layer of skin for effective melding. Magical items are repelled by the suit and fall to the ground. After the skin is covered by the substance, which is actually a magically reinforced mix of insect chitin and copper, the chitin forms plates that cover the body, still allowing a full range of movement. The remaining skin and flesh mold to fit perfectly inside the suit, with the muscles bonding to the exoskeleton in the same manner as a true insect's. Finally, the wearer's skeleton is removed and discarded. The suit is then as much a part of the wearer as the skin and skeleton were before.

The suit grants the wearer a natural Armor Class of 2 and a Strength of 19. As well as protecting the wearer from physical attacks, the magical nature of the exoskeleton grants a 20% magic resistance. The suit also grants the wearer the ability to *jump* at will. This power operates as if cast by a 3rd-level wizard.

Despite the beneficial effects of the *helm*, the wearer of the suit loses the ability to speak for as long as the helm is worn; this includes verbal spell components and command words. The character can only make high-pitched squeaks and mandible cracks. While in the suit, healing spells grant only half their normal benefit to the wearer, and the character's Charisma drops to an effective 4 because of the horrific appearance of the exoskeleton. Additional armor over the suit improves the

History of the Chitin Helm

The *chitin helm* was unintentionally created by the wizard Melorus Athundar during his attempts to construct an insectoid golem. At first, Athundar was livid with the results, but soon he found that a *charmed* wearer of the *helm* was much smarter than a golem and far less costly to replace; Melorus could simply give the *helm* to a new *charmed* warrior.

Athundar sent his armored juggernaut against the Sapphire Chain, a far-reaching order of rival wizards. Both Athundar's magical protections and those of the suit combined with the prowess of his handpicked warriors brought numerous mages to their knees. Finally Melorus grew careless in his assaults, as the power-blinded are apt to do. The wizard sent his insect warrior to raid the lair of Bristlebain, an ancient blue wyrm. The ensuing battle proved too much for the chitin warrior, and his body fell atop the dragon's hoard. Athundar succeeded in removing the *helm* from the fallen warrior while the dragon patrolled. However, as the wizard attempted to leave, he ran into the returning Bristlebain. His body fell beside the *helm*—before he was eaten.

XP Value: 4,000 **GP Value:** 16,000

wearer's Armor Class by only one. Any such additional armor must be specially crafted by an expert smith.

Once the suit is donned, it can be removed by a combination of *true seeing*, *dispel magic*, and *mending*, using the wearer's skeleton as the material component of the *mending* spell. If this combination is performed by a wizard of at least 14th level, the wearer of the *chitin helm* regains his or her former body, and the chitin suit melts into a pool of copper, leaving the *helm* undamaged. Alternatively, a *regenerate* cast by a 17th-level caster creates a new skeleton for the wearer, also causing the suit to melt, leaving only the *helm*.

Bone Wand

The *bone wand* looks like a thin 1'-tall skeleton. Two bloodred rubies of exquisite craftsmanship fill the eye sockets in the *wand's* small skull. The skeleton appears to be carved out of a singe piece of bone that has been smoothed and bleached over the ages. The bones are so detailed that the *wand* looks like a true skeleton, only much smaller. Despite the fragile appearance, the *bone wand* cannot be broken by nonmagical means.

The *bone wand* has three lesser powers and one greater power. The *wand* must be held, but only a silent act of will is required to trigger its powers. The *wand's* first three powers each cost one charge. The *bone wand* starts with 1d20 + 40 charges.

The first power of the *wand* is a ray of fear, which acts as a *fear* spell. The ray is a cone 40 feet long and 20 wide at its end, composed of darkness and shadows, and originating in the skeleton's ruby eyes.

The second power of the wand is *darkness 15' radius*.

The third power is the wand's ability to cast *protection from normal missiles*, the effect appearing as a swirling black cloud around the wielder. These mundane features are a mere sampling of the *bone wand's* power.

The wand's greater magic is its ability to cast *energy drain*. This power does not expend charges; instead it draws upon the life force of the user, namely the wielder's Constitution score. To use the *energy drain*, the wielder must temporarily give up 1 point of Constitution. This bestows the power needed to cast the *energy drain*. These Constitution points are regained naturally, one point for every 8 hours of complete rest.

With each use of the *energy drain* power, the *wand* trembles. Aside from the faint reverberation and glowing in the wand's eye sockets, the wielder does not notice any other difference in the *wand*. In truth, the *energy drain* imparts the skeleton with life energy stolen from the target of the *energy drain*. Starting with the first use, the *energy drain* gives the *wand* power over its head; each successive use empowers the left arm, right arm, torso, left leg, and finally the right leg. The *wand* is actually an intelligent creature and does not let its wielder know that it is gaining life. The only hint is the telltale shiver after using the *energy drain*. Otherwise, the *wand* still seems as solid as ever.

After the *wand* has control of its head, the skeleton can expend charges to use its *fear*, *darkness*, and *protection* spells to preserve the life of its wielder so that the character can set it free using the *life drain*. However, after its final leg is empowered, the skeleton instead tries to destroy its wielder. After its body is entirely free, the skeleton is completely

History of the Bone Wand

The *bone wand* was crafted by the lich Vecorum Greenmane. His enjoyment was in the process of creation, however, and soon the *wand* joined a collection of other wands that gathered dust in his laboratory.

Geldalvia, an elven sorceress who Vecorum fancied, saw the *wand's* potential. It was one of the many treasures that the girl looted from the lich's tower as she fled one night. Foolishly, the girl sought refuge in a mountain cave, where she met her demise in the form of a young black dragon. The wyrm, Kruvelykai, took a liking to the *bone wand* and hung it about his neck.

In return for what remained of Geldalvia's body, Vecorum explained the uses of the *bone wand* to the dragon. He maliciously neglected to mention the sentience of the *wand*. The *wand* recognizes what a powerful ally the dragon could be. It is believed to remain in the dragon's clutches even today.

XP Value: 3,500 **GP Value:** 6,500

Skeleton:
Int genius; AL LE; AC 4; MV 6; HD 2+4; hp 20; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SA *fear, darkness 15' radius, energy drain*; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 15%; ML 16.

independent and can use its *energy drain* at a cost of 7 charges (with no Constitution loss).

Use of the *wand's energy drain* forms a bond between the *wand* and its wielder. This bond manifests when the *wand* gains complete control of its form, at which time the life force of the wielder and the *wand* become intertwined. This means that the wielder suffers any wound delivered to the *wand*. If the *wand* is reduced to 0 hit points, it reverts to its immobile state, and the wielder must make a saving throw vs. death magic or die. Only an *anti-magic shell* can protect the wielder from this damage, although a *negative plane protection* spell reduces damage to the wielder by half.

The bond also allows the wand to communicate via telepathy with its wielder, haunting the character's every moment. After 24 hours of the *wand's* evil whispers, the wielder must make a successful saving throw vs. spell (or a madness check if using the RAVENLOFT® campaign rules) or else suffer the effects of a *feeblemind* spell.

One way to break the bond between the *bone wand* and its wielder requires a 10th-level or higher spellcaster to cast a combination of *dispel evil* and *dispel magic*. Another way the bond can be broken is by "slaying" the *wand* or depleting it of charges, either of which situations cause it to revert to its immobile form. Within 24 hours of the separation, the wielder must make a Wisdom check; success indicates that the character returns to sanity. If the check fails, the character's insanity can be cured only by a *heal*, *restoration*, or *wish* spell or the successful use of the *psychic surgery* psionic ability.

All of the *bone wand's* abilities operate as if cast by an 18th-level wizard.

Candelabra of Holding

The *candelabra of holding* looks like an ordinary gold candelabra. It is a three-pronged candleholder covered with detailed engravings. There are only three areas without decoration. At the base of each candle stem is a blank circle.

When the *candelabra* is held and the command word spoken followed by the name of a creature visible to the wielder, that creature is drawn toward the *candelabra*. A successful saving throw vs. spell leaves the target with slight nausea as the character's soul escapes the *candelabra's* pull. However, if the saving throw fails, the target disappears into the *candelabra*.

The *candelabra of holding* can be used on a person only once. On a successful use, however, the blank circle at the base of the stem becomes engraved with the face of the captive person. If a candle is placed in this stem, lit, and totally consumed, the prisoner is killed and cannot be *raised* or *resurrected*. If the prisoner is killed, then that stem is expended and cannot be reused. Only stems with live prisoners can be emptied for reuse. This is done by speaking the command word followed by the prisoner's name.

Each morning that dawns with a live prisoner in the *candelabra*, the user must make a saving throw vs. spell for each captive or else be drawn into the stem as the previous prisoner is released. A saving throw must be made for each live prisoner until all succeed or one is failed.

If the owner of the *candelabra* does not kill or release a prisoner before a number of days equal to half the prisoner's Constitution (round fractions up) has passed, then the prisoner is released. The captive "leaks" out of the prison and forms a pale yellow wax golem (*RAVENLOFT® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendix III*; alternatively, use clay golem statistics). The wax golem can unerringly locate and seeks to slay its jailer. Only by destroying its captor can the wax golem revert to its original form.

While the powers of the *candelabra of holding* are strong, the candelabra itself is a weak object. (It makes saving throws as thin wood). If the *candelabra* is

History of the Candelabra of Holding

The *candelabra of holding* was crafted by Count Belkus Glommer. The Count finished the *candelabra* in the last days of his life, and upon his demise, it remained in his laboratory in his swamp-hidden mansion for years.

Finally, the count's daughter, Kelthiaz, felt drawn to the mansion and took up residence in the empty house. There she spent years honing her own magical powers while striving to uncover her father's magical secrets. The *candelabra* played an integral part in dissuading lizard men attacks coming from the swamps.

Soon Kelthiaz assumed leadership of the tribe of lizard men. Visitors to the Glommer mansion spoke of lizard men bodyguards as well as sentinels in the decorated halls. What had previously been a humorous prospect was now evoking fear in neighboring towns, as witnesses claimed to have seen Kelthiaz's black coach, pulled by eight lizard men, rumble through the streets at night. The fact that no visitor has returned from the Glommer mansion in recent months adds to this new fear.

XP Value: 4,500 **GP Value:** 13,500

bent or broken, or if a candle in an occupied stem is extinguished before it has been fully consumed, then all beings trapped in the *candelabra* are slain. Each prisoner slain in this way becomes a wax golem intent only on the death of its captor. Golems created by the *candelabra* melt away as soon as their captor is slain, but they can be restored to life and their original forms by use of a *resurrection* or *wish* spell.

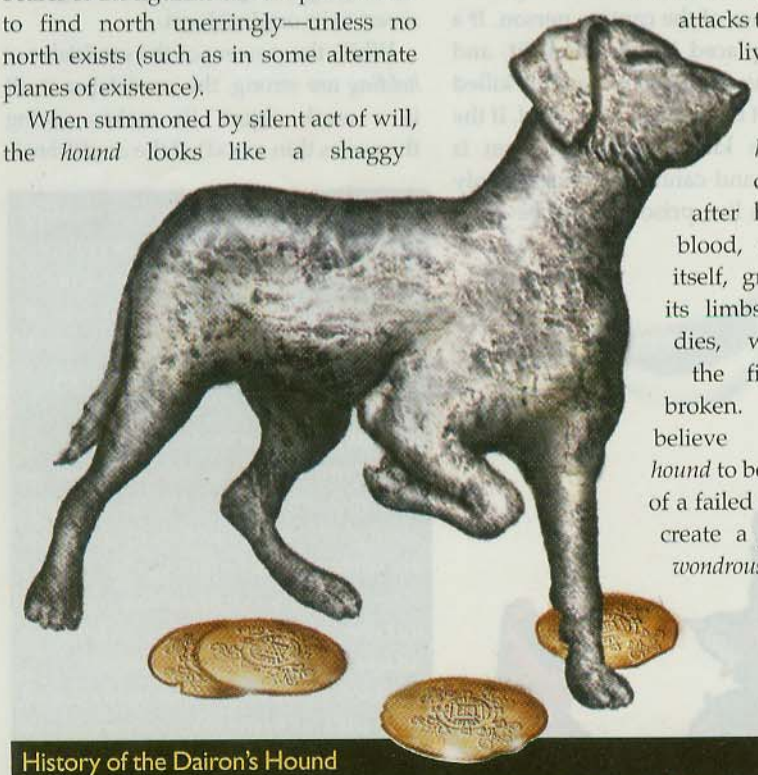
Dairon's Hound

Dairon's hound is a creature summoned from a small figurine made of polished gray soapstone. The figure looks like a small dog with its left foreleg raised and its nose pointed straight. Although it is made from soapstone, *Dairon's hound* cannot be broken by nonmagical means.

When the *hound* is not summoned, the bearer of the figurine can clasp the statue to find north unerringly—unless no north exists (such as in some alternate planes of existence).

When summoned by silent act of will, the *hound* looks like a shaggy wolfhound with curly gray fur and slate gray eyes without pupils. *Dairon's hound* can stay on the Prime Material Plane for 16 hours before returning to the figurine to replenish its energy. For every 4 hours that *Dairon's hound* spends on the Prime Material Plane, it must rest for 1 hour within the figurine. The bearer can dismiss the hound at any time, but if *Dairon's hound* is slain while summoned, the figurine crumbles to dust.

While on the Prime Material Plane, the *hound* unerringly performs any action that the bearer instructs. Actions include tracking, fetching, guarding, and fighting. However if *Dairon's hound* is given the order to attack, it goes after its prey with savage ferocity. Once the dog has tasted blood, its gray eyes take on a red gleam, and it cannot stop killing. After shredding its initial target, *Dairon's hound* indiscriminately attacks the nearest living creature. If *Dairon's hound* is confined after has tasted blood, it attacks itself, gnawing at its limbs until its dies, whereupon the figurine is broken. Most believe *Dairon's hound* to be the result of a failed attempt to create a *figurine of wondrous power*.



History of the Dairon's Hound

Dairon's hound was crafted by Telnilod, the youngest son of a noble family. Since Telnilod was an unsuccessful fighter and an equally poor wizard, his family let him live out his days at home. There he spent their money and emptied their wine cellar but could do little to tarnish the family name.

In his boredom, the middle-aged man took to hunting and creating magical tools. His greatest accomplishment was the statuette he named *Dairon's hound*. In accordance with his luck, however, the young man awoke one morning half in and half out of the Marnin Fountain with a pounding head and empty pouch.

Since then, the *hound* has popped up in various thieves' guilds, only to be fenced once more to a new owner.

XP Value: 1,500 **GP Value:** 3,000

Hourglass of Lost Youth

The *hourglass of lost youth* is well named, for while its powers are great, it has a hidden danger. The 1'-tall *hourglass* is crafted of smooth, blue-tinted glass and capped with mahogany ends inlaid with silver.

The *hourglass of lost youth* grants its user the ability to halt the flow of time as per a *time stop* spell. The user must state how long the *time stop* persists (no longer than 1 hour) before upending the *hourglass*. When the *hourglass* is flipped, the sand flows through at a variable rate so as to finish at the time stated by the wielder.

After every use of the *hourglass*, the character using it ages 7 years. The backlash of the hourglass is not immediately evident, however. A failed Intelligence check means that the character does not recognize the aging of his or her own body. The character remains ignorant of the change until someone brings it to his or her attention or the character sees a mirror or other reflective device. A character can also discover the aging whenever he or she fails an action based on an ability score that has dropped as a result of the aging (a Strength check, for instance). The character does not gain the increased Wisdom and Intelligence associated with aging but suffers the loss of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution normally. This aging occurs because the *hourglass* must replenish its energy for its next use.

The *hourglass* is a fragile item; it makes saving throws as glass. If it is broken, the sands begin to swirl until they have created a howling tornado that tugs at nearby creatures, but not as strongly as its pulls at the fabric of time. The tornado spins for 1d20 rounds before dying down. While the tornado spins, it draws life energy from all creatures within 50 feet of its base, aging them 1 year per round. The tornado also yanks open a temporary portal to the Demiplane of Time, and each round there is a 25% chance of a creature from the demiplane being drawn to the Prime Material Plane.

Dairon's Hound:
Int genius; AL N; AC 4; MV 18; HD 4+4; hp 36; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; MR 15%; ML 20.

History of the Hourglass of Lost Youth

The *hourglass of lost youth* was the product of a *wish* a young man posed to a powerful but malicious dao. Thinking the genie was under his complete control, the young man did not realize the device's drawback before he freed its servant.

While the young man was not foolish, nor was he worldly or wise. After using the *hourglass* to rob an entire town of its riches, he struck off into the wilderness. There he accidentally stumbled into the web of the werespider Cothalrixn. In a panic, the boy burned 20 years of his life trying to break free of the spider's web, but he succeeded only in making himself weaker. Then, as if to further his own torment, he expended the next 60 years of his life trying to postpone the inevitable fate that Cothalrixn promised as she crawled down the web.

Since then, the gray-haired spider-elf has designed many devious tricks that utilize the power of the *hourglass*. Curiously, for all of her use of the item, Cothalrixn has yet to show noticeable signs of aging.

XP Value: 4,000 **GP Value:** 6,500

The Silver of Life's Reflection

The *silver of life's reflection* is an oval mirror of polished silver standing on legs carved to resemble eagle talons. Over 6 feet tall, the *silver* reflects the full image of any Medium-sized creature. Ivy vines crafted of silver entwine the *silver's* face.

The mirror is not just a fancy ornament, although it would be fitting in the richest monarch's private rooms. The *mirror* uses life force to create a duplicate of the reflected individual, just as a *simulacrum* spell. Because of the superior magic of the *silver*, all duplicates have 60% of the hit points of the real creature, as well as 50% of the levels (if applicable).

When someone stands before the *mirror* and the command word is spoken, whether by the reflected individual or another, the *silver* ripples and the reflection steps out of the *silver* through a translucent film. The duplicate resembles the original in every way, including equipment; however, duplicated magical items do not have magical powers.

When a duplicate is formed, the speaker of the command word permanently loses 4 hit points. These hit points cannot be regained by any power short of a *wish*. As soon as the duplicate is created, it is under the control of the speaker of the command word. The duplicate follows instructions as a person of the duplicate's Intelligence normally would. The controller can also see through the eyes of the clone at will. In this way, a person can duplicate himself or herself for dangerous missions, or the character can duplicate another so that person will not be missed if kidnapped.

Simon is in the midst of his freshman year of college, which he hopes turns out to be four years of gaming.

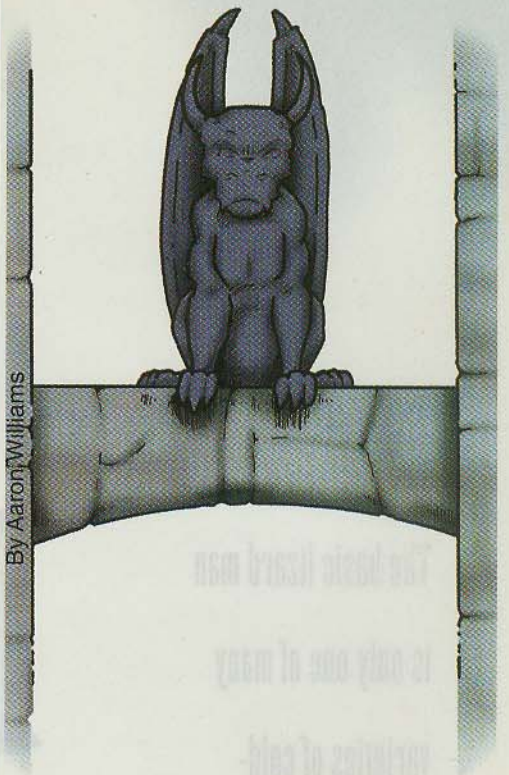
History of the Silver of Life's Reflection

The *silver of life's reflection* was created by an elderly elf as a gift for her beautiful but vain young niece. Pointel, the aunt of Gaveal, was jealous of her second-rate position behind her brother. She convinced him to lead a crusade against an orcish threat that proved too much for his band. Pointel took up the crown in his absence. Anything left behind that reminded the elf of her predecessor was destroyed or removed from the palace.

Gaveal was lucky. Pointel, seeing a bit of herself in her niece, took pity on the girl. Instead of taking her life, she had a secluded silver tower erected for her. The tower located deep in the wilds is practically unknown, partly because Gaveal, the sole inhabitant, cannot leave it. The food stores are magically replenished daily, as are all other essentials.

In her solitude, Gaveal has slowly lost her grip on sanity. Now she whiles away the hours, doted upon by duplicated servants. Furthermore, because of her ability to look through their eyes combined with her mild insanity, the girl cannot remember which Gaveal she truly is.

XP Value: 3,500 **GP Value:** 10,000



The Lizard Folk

The basic lizard man is only one of many varieties of cold-blooded adversary. Here are seven more reptilian rivals.

by Michael Kuciak

illustrated by Pete Venters

LIZARD MEN ARE FAIRLY COMMON LOW-LEVEL ADVERSARIES, right along with orcs, goblins, kobolds, and the rest of the humanoids of the AD&D® game. With all of the lizard species in the real world, why should there be only one species of lizard folk? Here are several lizard folk variations taken from some of the fiercest predators in the reptile world, each a great addition to any campaign world.

Subspecies of lizard folk rarely interact with each other mostly because of geography. When they do share territory, different subspecies tend to ignore each other. They are cold-blooded, after all, and have little sense of camaraderie.

Each subspecies speaks its own dialect of the standard Lizard Man tongue. These languages are difficult for humans and demihumans to learn, so the DM might impose a nonweapon proficiency penalty on non–lizard-folk characters. The geckonid dialect, for instance, involves clicking and croaking sounds that human voice boxes cannot reproduce. Though the basic phrases might be the same, it is different from the speech of a hissing varanid or rumbling crocodilian. Likewise, few lizard folk are fluent in Common or demihuman tongues. If they know a warm-blooded language, it is probably a pidgin version.

Like other lizard folk, the males and females of the sub-species are hard to tell apart without a thorough, embarrassing search. Since they appear the same, there is little separation of roles along gender lines among the lizard peoples.

The Lizard Folk PC

The *Complete Book of Humanoids* presents rules for running a lizard man player character. Creating a subspecies PC runs along the same general lines, with a few notable exceptions.

Although some lizard folk subspecies are stronger than others, a certain level of Strength and Constitution remains necessary to survive their natural environments. Varanids and master crocodilians actually kill their weak. Charisma penalties are disregarded when dealing with other lizard folk, unless noted in their descriptions.

Hit Dice. PC lizard folk receive Hit Dice by class. Agrutha and crocodilians gain 6 bonus hit points at 1st level. Master crocodilians and varanids start with 2 bonus hit points at 1st level.

Alignment. PC lizard folk can be of any alignment, though they tend toward neutrality. It is a rare master crocodilian who is not evil, however.

Natural Armor Class. Agrutha and crocodilians have a natural AC of 5. Varanids have AC 7. Geckonids and iguanids both have AC 10. Geckonids,

Ability Score Adjustments

	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Agrutha	+2	—	+2	–2	—	–2
Brute Crocodilian	+3	—	+2	–2	–1	–2
Master Crocodilian	—	—	—	—	—	—
Varanid	+1	+1	—	—	—	–2
Geckonid	–1	+3	–1	—	–1	—
Tokay	—	+3	—	—	–1	–2
Iguanid	—	+2	—	–2	—	—

Ability Score Min/Max.

	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Agrutha	16/20	3/18	14/20	2/12	2/12	2/8
Brute Crocodilian	16/21	3/18	14/20	2/12	2/12	2/8
Master Crocodilian	8/18	3/18	8/18	3/18	3/18	3/18
Varanid	12/18	4/19	8/16	3/18	3/17	3/18
Geckonid	5/16	12/21	3/16	3/18	3/17	3/18
Tokay	8/18	12/21	8/18	3/18	2/16	2/16
Iguanid	8/18	8/20	3/18	2/16	3/16	3/18

Class Level Limits

	Fighter	Ranger	Mage	Cleric	Druid	Shaman	Thief
Agrutha	12	—	—	—	—	5	—
Brute Crocodilian	12	—	—	—	—	—	—
Master Crocodilian	—	—	12	12	—	—	7
Varanid	15	12	—	—	—	7	9
Geckonid	8	—	7	—	—	—	12
Tokay	12	—	7	—	—	—	12
Iguanid	8	8	—	12	12	12	9

however, gain a –2 AC bonus if they are unarmored and fighting in an area where they can use their wall climbing ability to dodge (indoors, heavy forest, and so on).

Background. See individual descriptions.

Languages. Lizard Man, lizard folk dialect, possibly Common.

Roleplaying Suggestions. See individual descriptions.

Special Advantages.

• Like common lizard men, agrutha, crocodilians, and iguanids have no movement or attack penalties when in water and receive Swimming as a bonus proficiency. They can also stay underwater without drawing breath for a number of rounds equal to ⅔ their Constitution scores. Sea iguanids have gills and can stay underwater indefinitely.

• All lizard folk can fight with their claws, teeth, and tails.

• Varanids are ambidextrous. When fighting with two weapons, they receive a –2 penalty with their off hands and no penalty with their primary attacks.

• Geckonids can see invisible once they reach 5th level. All can Climb Walls as per the thief ability at 95%. Geckonid rogues also receive the following adjustments to their thief abilities: PP +15%, OL –10%, F/RT –10%, MS +5%, HS +5%, DN –5%, RL –20%.

• Iguanid PCs have a 5% magic resistance against wizard spells and magical item effects. They gain an additional +5% magic resistance at each level after 1st until reaching a maximum resistance of 25%. Iguanid thieves have the following adjustments to their thief abilities: PP +10%, OL –5%, F/RT –5%, MS –5%, HS +5%, DN –5%, CW +30%, RL –25%.

Special Disadvantages.

• Agrutha, crocodilians, and sea iguanids must wet their entire bodies at least once per day. If they cannot, they lose Constitution at a rate of 3 points per day. Lizard folk whose Constitutions fall to 0 die from dehydration.

• All lizard folk warriors start with two weapon proficiencies. Other classes start with one. The only exceptions are varanids, who receive full weapon proficiencies as per their class.

• Agrutha and brute crocodilians suffer damage as large creatures.

• Armor costs double the listed price for all lizard folk. Varanids refuse to carry shields. Geckonids and iguanids cannot wear armor heavier than studded leather. Iguanid and geckonid rogues suffer double the penalties to their thief abilities for wearing armor. Geckonids in armor do not gain their AC bonus.

• Lizard folk are cold-blooded beings. They suffer +1 hit point of damage per die from cold-based attacks. Also, if exposed to low temperatures (50° F or lower) for a prolonged period, they become sluggish. Sluggish lizard folk move at half normal rate and suffer a –2 attack penalty. Geckonids cannot dodge while sluggish.

Monstrous Traits. Monstrous appearance, bestial fear, bestial habits.

Superstitions. Each lizard folk subtype has its own fears and superstitions according to their personalities. Aquatic lizard folk fear dry heat. Agrutha, crocodilians, and varanids are afraid of displaying weakness to their fellows, who will kill them should they appear vulnerable. Geckonids avoid wide, open spaces where they cannot easily flee. Iguanids are highly religious and fear offending their gods by breaking any number of taboos, as decided by the player and DM.

Weapon Proficiencies: Various. See descriptions.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Alertness, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Fishing, Herbalism, Hiding, Hunting, Natural Fighting, Survival (home terrain).

By day, Mike is a chef, film student, and bass player in a punk rock band. By night, he keeps the streets of Chicago safe for the innocent as the Amish Avenger.

Agrutha

CLIMATE/TERRAIN	Temperate swamp
FREQUENCY	Very rare
ORGANIZATION	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE	Any
DIET	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE	Low (5–7)
TREASURE	D
ALIGNMENT	Neutral
NO. APPEARING	1–8
ARMOR CLASS	5
MOVEMENT	6, swim 12
HIT DICE	4+3
THAC0	17
NO. OF ATTACKS	3 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK	1–4/1–4/1–6 or 1–10
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE	Nil
SIZE	M (7'–8' tall)
MORALE	Champion (15–16)
XP VALUE	120
Leader	175
Shaman	175

Agrutha are huge, brutish versions of the normal lizard man. They have the snouts, powerful jaws, thick scales, and lashing tails of their animal ancestors, plus a pair of stubby legs and long, apelike arms. Agrutha ordinarily stand almost 8 feet tall and are hugely muscled. They wear no clothing and carry only what they need for the moment.

Combat: Agrutha prefer to attack by ambush. Like normal alligators on the hunt, they submerge themselves up to their eyes in muddy water and wait for a chance to spring. While doing this they can easily pass for logs or regular alligators to the casual eye. Though usually sluggish, agrutha are capable of short, sudden bursts of speed. Despite their size, they have a good chance of catching anybody by surprise who is not looking out for them. If enraged or unable to ambush, agrutha charge headlong into the midst of their enemies, bellowing the whole time.

Agrutha fight with their massive fists and a crushing bite. If attacked from behind or given enough room, they swing their tails around for 1–10 points of damage. Agrutha occasionally use weapons, preferably crude spears or clubs they made themselves, or else finer weapons taken from past opponents. Agrutha have a natural 18/76 Strength, which gives them a +2 attack bonus and a +4 damage bonus to weapon attacks.

A group of seven or more includes a tribal alpha leader with maximum hit points and 18/00 Strength. The leader usually (75% chance) has a weapon. If the tribe is large enough to have an alpha, there is a 25% chance that a shaman is in the group. Agrutha shamans are usually 1st or 2nd level and are never higher than 3rd unless they are player characters.

Habitat/Society: Agrutha live in the deepest marshes and swamps. They ordinarily associate in loose tribes, staking out a territory in a small lake, river bed, or similar place. The tribal alpha is the biggest and strongest agrutha in the area. Even if they are a part of a tribe, agrutha tend to hunt singly or in pairs. Females lay eggs once a year in 2–3 egg clusters. They dig a large hole out of the mud in a secluded spot and line it with reeds and branches. The females fiercely protect the eggs and young until they have grown enough to fend for themselves. They stay in the nest, letting the males hunt for them, and they gain a +2 attack and damage bonus while defending the nest.

Because they live in the same areas and have similar outlooks, agrutha are the most likely of all the sub-species to associate with common lizard folk. If the two peoples live close to each other, there is a good possibility the agrutha hunt and protect the territory along side their smaller cousins. Lizard kings and leaders enjoy using them as berserker shock troops.

Ecology: Agrutha eat the meat of whatever animal gets close enough to them while they are hunting, including humans. They will not, however, go out of their way to attack settlements unless they are goaded into doing so by other lizard folk. They typically subsist on deer, fish, bears, and whatever else they can get their jaws on.

	Brute	Master
CLIMATE/TERRAIN	River beds	Temples, cities
FREQUENCY	Very rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION	Solitary or tribe	Solitary or tribe
ACTIVITY CYCLE	Any	Any
DIET	Carnivore	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE	Low (5–7)	Very (11–12)
TREASURE	D	K
ALIGNMENT	Neutral	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING	1 or 2–7	1 or 2–7
ARMOR CLASS	5	5
MOVEMENT	9, swim 12	9, swim 12
HIT DICE	5	3+2
THAC0	15	17
NO. OF ATTACKS	2	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK	2–8/1–12 or by weapon	2–8 or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Nil	Spell casting
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Nil	Spell casting
MAGIC RESISTANCE	Nil	Nil
SIZE	L (8' tall)	M (6'–7' tall)
MORALE	Elite (14)	Elite (14)
XP VALUE	175	270
High priest		420

Crocodilians are much like agrutha except they are larger and even more ferocious. Full-grown crocodilians can reach up to 15 feet in length from nose to tail tip.

Combat: Crocodilians fight with long jaws and sledgehammer tails. Some use weapons, but these are always taken from or traded with others, as their natural weaponry is formidable. If they wield weapons, they are usually large—two-handed swords, halberds, or battle-axes. A crocodilian with weapon in hand can bite or tail strike in the same round, but not both. Brute crocodilians have Strengths of 18/76–18/00. A few (10%) have Strength 19.

Habitat/Society: Crocodilians are more solitary than their alligator brethren. While agrutha live in groups, crocodilians tend to stay away from each other. If they meet, they are likely to fight for dominance. Crocodilians sometimes build mud-and-straw huts but are just as likely to live in the water with whatever regular crocodiles are in the area. They hunt wherever other crocodiles might be found.

Crocodilians congregate in small tribes if near a large number of crocodiles, the hunting is good, or a strong leader appears. Such crocodilians live in a small hut village, abandoned buildings near the water, or underwater caverns. There is a 50% chance that 1–4 giant crocodiles live near them, too.

Though short-tempered and frightening in battle, they are more likely to talk with humans and demihumans than agrutha are (unless, of course, they are very hungry). While not terribly bright, crocodilians consider themselves the equal of other sentient races and might exchange goods or information. Crocodilians are highly territorial, though, and it is not a good idea to invade their hunting grounds without their consent.

Ecology: Brute crocodilians have little to fear from others. They eat meat and are big enough to take down pretty much any prey they desire. Crocodilian females lay eggs once a year during the wet season.

Master Crocodilians: The masters (as they refer to themselves) are smaller, evil versions of crocodilians. They take malicious glee in killing and eating humans. They fill their days and nights with mirth borne of vile acts, laughing incessantly with guttural chuckles. The masters retain their crocodilian jaws, but their tails are shorter (only 2–3 feet long) and cause no damage. Masters typically fight with weapons and make up for their small size with spellcasting ability. They are all at least 5th-level priests of Set, Anubis, or another evil deity.

Masters typically set themselves up in the sewers or a hidden temple in a large city where they can hatch their loathsome plans. While solitary by nature, they sometimes congregate in small sects. If there are five or more masters together, one of them is a high priest who has been granted 7th-level spellcasting ability and the physical size and combat ability of a brute. Brute crocodilians do not like the masters, but the latter have a knack for manipulating the brutes. Master crocodilians enjoy the company of mummies, jackalweres, and spirit nagas. They often have a pit of normal or giant crocodiles in the depths of their lairs for sacrificing victims.

Master crocodilians are scholars of history, religion, and evil magic. On the other hand, they never learn the spoken languages of warm-blooded sentients. To their ears, human speech is nothing more than the bleating of sheep.

Varanids

CLIMATE/TERRAIN	Tropical
FREQUENCY	Very rare
ORGANIZATION	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE	Any
DIET	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE	Average (8–10)
TREASURE	D
ALIGNMENT	Neutral
NO. APPEARING	1–6 or 8–15 (1d8+7)
ARMOR CLASS	7
MOVEMENT	15,
HIT DICE	2
THAC0	19
NO. OF ATTACKS	4 or 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK	1–3/1–3/1–4/2–5 or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE	Nil
SIZE	M (6'–7' tall)
MORALE	Champion (15)
XP VALUE	65
Lasher/war leader	120
Commander	270
Sshistak	650
Shaman, 3rd	175
Shaman, 5th	420

The natives of certain tropical islands live in fear of the reptilian warriors who strike in the darkness to take their children and plunder their villages. Fast, lithe, agile, and vicious, varanids are a warrior race of bipedal komodo dragons. When not on the hunt, they are a quiet, harsh, emotionless people. In combat, though, they are bereft of fear or mercy.

Combat: Varanids have a full array of natural weaponry: talons, teeth, and a 6'-long whiplike tail ridged with razor-sharp scales. They also enjoy using weapons, and they often enter combat with a strange array of curved axes, swords with blades at both ends of the pommel, double-headed spears, barbed nets, and star-shaped punch daggers, all of their own bizarre design. They have a natural affinity for weapons and quickly learn to use whatever weapons they find. Almost every member of the race is ambidextrous, and warriors usually fight with two weapons and strike with their tails in the same round. They never use shields, which they consider to be for the weak, and they wear only small pieces of armor.

For every ten warriors present, there is a 3-HD "lasher" whose task is to whip the warriors into battle fury and kill any who dare to flee. In small parties, one of the lashers acts as the war leader. For every three lashers there is an additional 5-HD commander. Every tribe has a 7-HD warrior-king (or *sshistak*) and a shaman (5th-level priest). The priest has 1–4 3rd-level acolytes. Varanids worship a minor pantheon of reptilian gods.

As ferocious as they are, varanid warriors are wily, cunning fighters. They use every dirty trick and guerrilla tactic without reservation. Because varanid minds are so alien, human opponents can never be sure what to expect. Hit-and-run attacks, sudden ambushes, night fighting, decoys, snares, spoiler runs, and even terror tactics are all part of their strategy.

Habitat/Society: Varanids live in dense jungles, on tropical islands, or amid wide savannas. They typically gather in tribes of about 100–150 individuals, including their young. They tend to build hut villages around natural formations.

Varanids live to prove themselves in war. The best warrior, in their minds, makes the best leader. Ironically, when not fighting they are a reserved, peaceful species. They rarely fight among themselves and spend their days spear fishing, swimming, repairing huts, and sunning themselves on rocks. If carefully approached, they are not averse to talking or trading. Varanids speak a highly developed dialect of the common Lizard Man tongue that warm-bloods can learn with practice.

Varanids live by a stoic philosophy of strength and ability. To them, there is no excuse for failure. Unavoidable accident is one thing; allowing yourself to fall for a trick is another. They feel that their defeated enemies wanted to be beaten. If not, why did they not make themselves stronger than the varanids?

From time to time, varanid warriors wander off to prove themselves on other battlegrounds. Singly or in small groups, they drift into civilized territories where they offer themselves as mercenaries or assassins. They do not like to work as bodyguards, though, as standing around waiting for a fight to happen is against their nature. They are predators, not protectors.

Ecology: Varanids live by a strict meat diet. They generally prefer fish, birds, and eggs but will eat anything that bleeds. Varanids actively search for new settlements to raid and new fights to pick.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN	Tropical, subtropical or urban
FREQUENCY	Very rare
ORGANIZATION	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE	Nocturnal
DIET	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE	Average (8–10)
TREASURE	D
ALIGNMENT	Neutral good
NO. APPEARING	1–8 or 2–20
ARMOR CLASS	4
MOVEMENT	12, climb 12
HIT DICE	1
THAC0	19
NO. OF ATTACKS	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK	By weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE	Nil
SIZE	M (5'–6' tall)
MORALE	Steady (11–12)
XP VALUE	35

Small, quick, brightly-colored, and curious, geckonids are the friendliest of the lizard peoples. Soft, interconnecting scales of green, blue, red, and brown cover their skin. Most stand around 5 feet tall (except the tokays—see below). Their limbs are short and thin, their tails short and stubby. The most striking features of the geckonids are their eyes: huge, bulbous orbs on either side of their faces. Most interesting, though, are the suction cups on their fingers and toes that allow them to climb walls and ceilings as if they were floors.

Combat: Geckonids would rather run away than fight, since their teeth and claws are too small to cause damage. If forced to fight, they use speed and climbing to their advantage.

Since they can stick to almost any surface and leap up to 30 feet, geckonids often have the advantage of surprise. In combat they run along walls to throw off their opponents, dodge blows by leaping to the ceiling, and—if things go badly—scamper up a steep surface. If fighting in an area where there are a lot of surfaces (indoors, urban streets, forest or jungle, or similar environments), they have the AC given above. While fighting in the open, they can still rely on their natural speed and dexterity, but their AC drops to 7. Immobilized geckonids are AC 10.

Geckonids can see invisible creatures and objects. They do not realize the things they see are invisible and, if associating with others, assume that everybody else notices the invisible person or object as well. They can all Climb Walls (95%), Hide in Shadows (50%), Move Silently (75%), and Backstab, which is their favored method of fighting. Geckonids have mild chameleon abilities. Their skin color changes slightly according to their mood and surroundings.

Habitat/Society: Geckonids live in small communal tribes and prefer small villages in steaming jungles and forests.

Geckonids are driven by an insatiable curiosity. They love to explore, and they frequently wander into nearby cities, which they consider treasuries of unending interest. After exposure to civilization, geckonids often become thieves (up to 12th level) or even mages (up to 7th level), with a corresponding increase in Hit Dice. They do not feel avarice. Rather, they steal as an excuse to poke around in others' belongings. It amuses them to dodge the law by running up the sides of buildings and peeking over the edges to see the looks on the guards' faces.

Geckonids are generally friendly, cheerful, and polite in their own odd manner. They have a different way of thinking. They like to observe conversations, interjecting only to make a strange comment or tell a joke only they understand. For instance, a geckonid might loudly croak in someone's face, then pretend the speaker had said something important in the geckonid's own language. Or, a geckonid might hold open his mouth for several minutes. If asked why, the geckonid claims to be waiting for the birds to come out. Geckonids play bizarre, harmless pranks on their friends when they are bored.

Ecology: Geckonids live on birds, small animals, and insects. In the wild, the small, weak geckonids have much to fear from predators. Were it not for their speed and climbing abilities, the species would have vanished long ago.

Tokays: The dark side of normal geckonids, tokays are large, strong, and ill-tempered. Tokays stand almost 6 feet tall and have teeth large enough to bite for 1d4 points of damage. All have pink scales with gray dots. Tokays tend toward neutral or neutral evil. If they take a class, they usually become thieves to steal and cause trouble. They have the same odd outlook as other geckonids but with a rude, cruel bent. The loud croak of a tokay geckonid sounds somewhat like a dog barking.

Iguanids

CLIMATE/TERRAIN	Tropical or sub-tropical
FREQUENCY	Rare
ORGANIZATION	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE	Any
DIET	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE	Low to average (5–10)
TREASURE	D
ALIGNMENT	Neutral

NO. APPEARING	2d10+12
ARMOR CLASS	7
MOVEMENT	12, climb 9, swim 12
HIT DICE	1+1
THAC0	19
NO. OF ATTACKS	3 or 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK	1–3/1–3/1–4 or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES	+2 to saving throws vs. poison
MAGIC RESISTANCE	25% (see below)
SIZE	M (6'–7' tall)
MORALE	Steady (11–12)
XP VALUE	35
Shaman, 3rd	175
Shaman, 5th	650
Shaman, 7th	1,400

Iguana people, or iguanids, are tall, thin, enigmatic creatures. They stand 6 feet tall or more, their heads and throats adorned with large frills. They have long talons on their hands and feet for climbing and fighting.

Iguanids are immensely adaptable and the most prolific of the lizard peoples. They change easily to meet the needs of their surroundings. The most common iguanids are the large tree-dwelling tribes, marked by their long tails and bright green scales. The northern rock iguanid tribes have dull gray or brown coloration, stronger limbs, and shorter tails. Island iguanids make their homes on rocky shores and can breathe water as well as air. They have heavy, lumpy bodies and heads and hard, brownish-green scales.

Iguanids wear little clothing, but they enjoy body painting, jewelry, tattoos, and other adornments. There is much to be read in the coloration and detail of an iguanid's face paint, which displays the individual's social status.

Combat: Iguanids are largely peaceful and prefer to keep to themselves. They avoid combat unless their homes or young are threatened. As iguanids are not ordinarily given to fighting without reason, they have little grasp of tactics. They swarm out from hiding and try to take down their opponents by sheer numbers. If that fails, they flee and relocate.

Iguanids usually fight with weapons, preferring spears, javelins, and darts. Their long, sharp talons are built for climbing but make effective weapons in a pinch. They can also whip opponents with their tails. Iguanids can whip with their tails and strike with either a weapon or claws in the same round.

Iguanids are deeply religious. For every ten iguanids, there will be a 3rd-level druid shaman. For every thirty, there is a 5th-level druid shaman. Each tribe is led by a druid of at least 7th level.

Much like dwarves, iguanids have an inherent resistance to magic. Iguanids must roll for failure even if they cast spells, read scrolls, or use magical items that require activation (not magical weapons and other permanent magic). The chance of failure is 20%. This effect applies only to wizard spells and items, not to priest spells and divine effects. Iguanids' own druidic powers are unrestricted. They also gain a +2 saving throw bonus vs. poison.

Iguanids are excellent climbers, though not the equal of their geckonid cousins. They have an effective Climb Walls ability of 75%. Within their natural environments (trees for greens, mountains and cliffs for the rock tribes) their climbing ability rises to 85%, and they have a 40% chance to Hide in Shadows.

Habitat/Society: Iguanids base their lives around a worship of natural forces. Their priests are all druids. They follow a strict series of taboos, holidays, and religious observances. Iguanids reflect their worship in face painting and personal adornment.

The common green iguanids live in villages built among the tree tops of their hot jungle homes. Since they are such good climbers, they do not need to connect their homes with bridges, ladders, or ropes. Their tribes are loose theocracies ruled by shamans who oversee their people's simple lives of hunting, gathering, and religious observance.

The rarer rock iguanid tribes make their homes among the cliffs, craggy hills, and deserts to the north of the jungles. They usually set up their village in a cave network but sometimes build simple hut villages if there is nothing available. The same goes for the sea iguanids, who are likely to live in seashore huts or air-filled, underwater caverns.

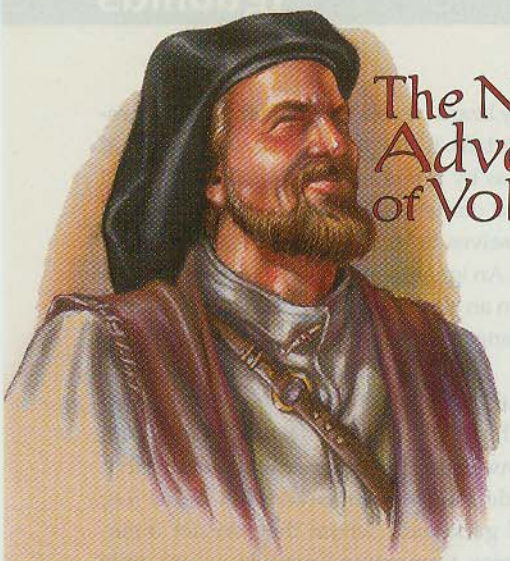
Most iguanids are rather stupid. They are happy to follow the dictates of the more intelligent iguanids who lead the religious ceremonies and control tribal life. Iguanids spend most of their time sitting in packs, sunning themselves, and contemplating the world around them. They rarely speak.

On the other hand, iguanids have an uncanny knack for making friends with natural creatures. They always have at least 1–6 giant iguanas around as guards (treat them as giant lizards) and mobs of regular iguanas as pets. There is a good (50%) chance that various other local animals, such as jaguars and giant snakes, frequent their villages.

The only exception to the general peacefulness of the iguanids is during the mating season. During this time, the males become aggressive and violent as they vie for the attentions of the females. Iguanid males rarely fight or kill each other, but their contests do make for a lot of loud croaking, wrestling, and head-bobbing. They do not allow outsiders near their villages during the mating season.

Iguanids are the only lizard people who retained their ancestors' ability to lose their tails. If an iguanid's tail is grabbed and strongly jerked, such as by a predator, it comes off. The tail grows back shorter and darker within a few weeks. Iguanids do not consider themselves to be adults until they have lost their tails at least once. An iguanid male might brag about how many tails he has lost in an attempt to prove that he has experienced a great deal of danger.

Ecology: Iguanids are the only lizard people who enjoy eating fruits and vegetables, though they frequently supplement their diet with birds, eggs, insects, and small animals. Iguanid tribes get along well. They do their best to avoid other lizard folk with the exception of geckonids, whom they do not mind. Varanids especially enjoy tormenting iguanids, whom they consider a weakling aberration of the lizard folk.



The New Adventures of Volo

By Ed Greenwood
Illustrated by Ron Spencer

Lost Princess Road

Volothamp Geddarm at your service, gentles, setting truths of the Realms before you like the first soft stars of twilight a-gleaming.

This day I write of a secret of the Magisters who serve Mystra, a matter revealed here to the watching world for the first time!

Hearken: Certain sages, wizards, adventurers, and darker creatures have long shared lore hidden from most folk of Faerûn. Our world is old; many walked it in elder days, and some of them wielded power to overmatch the archwizards whose names now thunder with power on the tongues of bards. Some of them created castles that float in the sky. Others hollowed out mountains. A few twisted living creatures into new shapes. A handful sought to make ways of swift travel across many lands with but a single stride and gave us unseen roads of linked gates that stand all over Faerûn, local secrets that few understand and fewer still dare to use.

These aren't castle or manor gates, nor yet the ruder barriers that keep cattle from wandering. These are enspelled places or things, magically linked to other places far away, so that one who knows them—or how to awaken them—can step from one gate to another in an instant, even if the two linked gates are at opposite ends of Faerûn!

Armies, beasts, or raiding brigands could well pass through such wondrous hidden roads to strike behind guarded walls, or at folk who little expect their impending arrival. Such gates are things to be guarded and kept secret. Knights guard some for their kings, wizards keep watch over others, and a few are forgotten by all, standing as unseen, waiting chinks in the armor of kingdoms or unexpected roads to riches.

A few adventurers, prospectors, and even honest folk blunder into gates every decade—and usually disappear forever, their fates mysterious. Yet no gate is unknown to the goddess of magic. She charges those who serve her, including the mages who win the title of Magister, to watch over such magical roads and observe who uses them. Though I've been unable to find any confirmation of this, I believe she intends some special doom for any being who presumes to use or control too many gates—or a conqueror would surely have used them to rule Faerûn long ago.[1]

I've found and at great personal risk traced one gate network end to end. I lay it before you now. Use it at your own risk; any stampede through it or casual exploitation of it is likely to bring the wrath of Mystra, and I fear death has found many, down the years, who've dared to walk "Lost Princess Road."

What All Know and the Eye Beholds

Of old, many kingdoms stood proud along the warm southern Sword Coast, small realms that came and went with passing years and the sharp and ready swords of dispute. These fallen lands are now forgotten or reduced to mere names in old books and older songs: Daryntoth, Faerlorna, Ghamland, Jonsilar, Naeraethma, Sartran, and Torsil, to name but a few.[2]

One such land lost even its name with the passing years, but I know it lay in what is now Tethyr, amid the Purple Hills. That land had a princess, one Darseera, remembered now only in the fading fragment of an old ballad:

Where stars and moon steal away
There is fair Darseera gone
Where that is, none can say
Mourn her going, everyone

Elminster's Notes:

1. Shrewdly reasoned, Master Volo. Scrutiny of gates is indeed a duty of all who serve Mystra. 'Tis also a duty, expressly charged by Our Lady, to allow magical lore to spread as freely as possible—which is the sole reason, intrepid scribe, that you're still alive.

2. The reader should be aware that most of these "realms" were little more than the farms claimed and patrolled by a single city, or between a city and the neighboring city it had already conquered. Aye, they were "kingdoms," but present-day Tethyr, for example, held more than two hundred of them; they were something akin to the Border Kingdoms of today.

Only the ghosts of its walls mark the site of a once-proud fortress.

That ballad is "Lost Princess Road," a name that survives on the signboard of an inn on the Trade Way south of Myratma, as well as in northern Calimshan (where some folk think it refers to an actual road, now lost and buried under the sands of the Calim Desert).

By misadventure or treachery, Darseera disappeared through a *gate* in the Purple Hills long ago, never to return to her land—and I, Volo, have found that *gate* and all the places it leads to.

The History of Lost Princess Road

I know not who built the Road, or even if it was all created by the same hands or at the same time. I can say that parts of it, at least, must be over a thousand years old. I can't say much more with certainty; as of this writing, the history of the Road is one thick, unread book of secrets. Darseera's fate is one such mystery.

The Road Today

I first stumbled upon the *gate* in the Purple Hills by accident, but I knew what it must be from something I once read in Candlekeep:

The Princess went by night into the garden, a-weeping at the match her father the King had set for her, and was seen to flee up the hill, under the watching moon. Guards were doubled around the garden walls, but she came not over. When the sun rose, she came not out, nor was there to be found, from one blossom-scented end of that fair place to the other, any sign of her. The King had it hacked down and burned in his rage, but he found no Princess ever again.[3]

Not far south of the holy house of St. Rhynda's in the hill country of brambles, steep hillsides, and shepherds' crofts is a pair of hills not studded with the usual stones. The sward around bears clear outlines of a long box of enclosing walls—walls now gone but for shadows left behind in the turf. It looks as though the larger, seaward hill was once crowned by a great fortress from which walls ran east to enclose the smaller, landward hill. All was later torn down and abandoned, the very stones carried away.

By chance, I came to that place (fleeing over hills from a fiercer-than-desirable welcome in Barrowmorn), noticed the outlines, and explored. It grew late; as the moon rose, I climbed the eastern hill, seeking a shelter among the rocks where I might sleep.

So it was that I stopped upon the only stone left on the two hills. I was standing on it, looking down at its smooth, squared shape and wondering if it betokened dwarves dwelling beneath, when the moonlight fell upon it. The *gate* in the Purple Hills works "outward" at any time, but only takes folk "in" through it when it is bathed in moonlight, and travelers touch that squared stone.

I was promptly elsewhere: an abandoned, overgrown quarry in the remote eastern barony of Hawkhill, hard by the Troll Mountains in northeasternmost Amn. In earlier days, the quarry was a cave, but storm or spellblast caused its

3. I never knew who wrote that ballad, but the account Volo quotes was set down circa 167 DR by the sage Kalvaerus, who dwelt somewhere along the banks of the River of Ice. He was recording coast lore, writing here about events that befell at least four centuries earlier. The King was probably Toroth "the Tyrant," who had six daughters and four wives, and conquered at least three realms to add to his own. One of his conquests was a land named Glaeron, but the name of his own realm is forgotten.

Thrusting any metal object into this gates "keyholes" activates its power.

collapse, and local crofters have chiseled away slabs of stone from the rockface ever since. They must have looked curiously at the four stone pillars that rise amid the rubble in two pairs, side by side, each as tall as two men and less than an arm's stretch from the rockface, but they left those pillars unbroken.

Perhaps the runes graven up and down the pillars gave the stonecutters pause. Surely they look impressive, but as far as I can tell have no magic stored in or linked to them, so perhaps they are either religious or a ruse to warn away the wary.

If they are directions or identify *gate* destinations, I can't read such meanings into them.[4] Whatever the reason, the pillars stand undamaged.

Each pair of pillars frames a fist-sized hole in the rock face behind, both at chest-level , each sunk about 4 feet into the rock. The only way to make the *gates* function is to thrust something metal (whatever is used remains undamaged and is transported with its wielder) through the relevant hole.[5]

The west *gate* links with the Purple Hills. The east *gate* whisks users to a tiny, bare islet just off the Sword Coast (although about 60 feet of sour-pounded, jagged rocks separate the islet from an overhanging cliff that's the mainland) north of the Chionthar's mouth, not far from Baldur's *Gate*.

Pirates know this islet, which is drenched with spray and slick with sea-ice in winter, as Skarn Rock. (Skarn was a reaver found sprawled dead on it after a smuggling deal went awry.) It rises perhaps 12 feet above highwater, runs parallel to the shore for twice the length of a large ship, and doesn't boast a single bush or tree. I'd judge it a poor place to leave smuggled goods.[6] A cleft at its north end can protect a rowboat, however, and there's even a rock spur that such a craft can be lashed to; marks on it indicate that many boats have been moored in the cleft.

Four shallow pits have been hewn out of the landward flank of Skarn Rock, each about as large across as a burly man's shoulders, and about 2 feet deep. They form two pairs, the nearest edges of each pair almost touching, leaving only a knife-edge of rock between. These are the *gates*, and one pair also boasts a trap.

If someone just steps into, or lies in, any of the pits, nothing happens. If someone casts a spell or invokes a magical item's power in either of the northern pits, that person is immediately affected as if by a *reverse gravity* spell. The unfortunate one is lifted 80 feet before being dropped (one journey per triggering only, even if the offending magic is still operating when the individual crashes back down).

The pits function as *gates* only if someone stands in one of a pair and shakes a drop (or more) of his or her own blood into the other.[7]

If one stands in the western pit of the southern pair, one is taken to the quarry in Hawkhill. The easternmost of the southern pair whisks a user to the top of a boulder on the rocky western slope of the gorge beneath the Bridge of Fallen Men in westernmost Cormyr.

One who stands in the westerly pit of the northern pair is taken to the top of a large, flat stone just east of Silavene's festhall in Waterdeep, on the seaward flank of the spur of Mount Waterdeep that shields the Cliffride from the rest of the city. If one stands in the eastern pit of the northern pair, the person travels to a pile of stones in the heart of a duskwood stand on the east bank of the Unicorn Run, just north of its meeting with the Delimibyr.

4. In fact, the symbols are pure fancy work, added by the wizard Shardrin of Memnon some decades ago to keep local dolts from quarrying the pillars—but the stones do hold strong magic, as several pick-wielders have learned to their cost. Any metal striking a pillar or the bared stone from which it rises—our excited scribe should have noticed the curious fact that the pillars seem to grow out of the surrounding stone—and any spell sent against a pillar causes chain lightning to erupt from the affected stone, each and every time 'tis harmed.

5. One can also awaken the gates by using command words not known by Volo: "Avalarray" for the gate to the west, which links with the Purple Hills and "Hoaloal" to make the eastern gate take ye to Skarn Rock.

6. And let it be known to all that Volo is no stranger to either judges or smuggling.

7. Again, the bloodletting can be avoided—and even the standing in the pit, if one merely reaches into a relevant pit and speaks the right words of activation: "Amderro" for travel to Hawkhill; "Soolacz" to reach the gate beneath the Bridge of Fallen Men; "Culdrin" to Silavene's; and "Javallan" to nigh the Unicorn Run. (I'm given to understand these were names of those who enspelled the Road.)

Saying the wrong word while touching the wrong pit causes 1d6 Vampiric Dread to rise up out of the pit and attack. These are weaponless, flying skeletal arms that strike until destroyed and can follow through gates; AC 6; MV 6, Fl 15(B), Sw 9, Jp 3; hp 20 each (plus gain half the hp damage they deal, 1 of these extra hp fading every 10 days; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SZ S; ML 20; INT Non; AL N; XP 1,400; MCA1.

Travelers should beware the guards who take shelter under the Bridge of Fallen Men.

Interestingly, anyone arriving at Skarn Rock from one of these places is transported into any of the pits, at random, and a bleeding creature won't arrive and immediately *gate* out again; they must leave a pit and subsequently enter one to operate it. A *gate* isn't blocked from functioning by the presence of a sleeping or dead body in its pit, but someone arriving appears on that body, trampling it (and inevitably awakening it, if it lives).

Well-equipped, mounted Cormyrean patrols guard the Bridge of Fallen Men, and betimes shelter under the bridge, in its shadow, when off duty on hot days. Travelers who arrive in darkness and keep quiet as they skulk away along the gorge should be able to escape detection.

Entry through this *gate* is accomplished as follows: The large arrival stone sports a horizontal row of four shallow, empty holes; hands, feet, elbows, or other parts of a user's living body must enter the two northern holes at the same time for the *gate* to function. Placing anything into the other two holes awakens magic that causes the intruding object or being to be thrown outward from the rock.[8]

The mountainside behind Silavene's festhall has been planted with mosses and flowering spreadleaf plants; these provide a screen for *gate*-users. A narrow trail from the *gate*-stone suggests that its presence isn't unknown. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that the two rear doors of the festhall transform into a succession of three helmed horrors that immediately attack if any spell or weapon strikes at the hinges, locks, or through the outermost layer of the doors' battle-plate. Visitors are advised to go around to the front, where the guards are human and ask questions before striking. Be aware that the pleasant lawn between Silavene's and the *gate* is divided into a succession of small bowers for professional reasons; arrivals in good weather are apt to find the area populated at all hours.

Traveling by this *gate* is achieved by touching the stone. For its magic to function, however, anyone doing so must carry either a piece of obsidian or something that is aflame (such as a candle or torch). The *gate*-journey always extinguishes the flame, but its source is otherwise unaffected.

The Unicorn Run *gate* is apparently unwatched and unguarded. Entry through it is accomplished by simultaneously touching a white boulder and a black boulder that can be found among many gray stones; as they are a good 7 feet apart, large beings will have to lie down, and smaller travelers will be forced to use a stick or other reaching aid.

Mounting evidence suggests that this road of linked *gates* is just one of scores, perhaps hundreds of such hidden magical means of transport across Faerûn. The fortunes of many merchant families might well be built on the use of such "family secrets." If half the tales I read in Candlekeep are true, this road is far shorter, simpler, and safer than most.[9]

8. In thy game terms, such a strike deals 2d6 points of damage and causes a tumble down into the gorge for an additional 4d4 points of damage, unless a saving throw vs. paralyzation is made.

9. Be warned: This speculation is correct—very correct. By "safer" here, Volo meant relatively free of traps, but unguarded and relatively forgotten gate-ways are of course less perilous than closely-watched ones.

After hundreds of DRAGON® Magazine *articles and nigh a hundred books, Ed Greenwood has finally embarked upon his most ambitious project: clearing enough of a path through his study that he'll be able to navigate from door to computer without performing any more Olympic acrobatics.*

The Band of Four

The creator of the Forgotten Realms® setting begins a new epic adventure.

by Ed Greenwood

illustrated by Dave Dorman

ONE DAY, THE BARDS SING, TRUE HEROES WILL WAKE The Sleeping King, to reclaim Aglirta, sweeping away fell barons and their wizards to make the Kingless Land once more a realm of pride, happiness, and glory. Of course, bards tell a lot of fanciful tales....

In *The Kingless Land*, Craer Delnbone and his friend Hawkril Anharu, soldiers of the Baron Blackgult, return to Aglirta from a disastrous military campaign to find themselves hunted outlaws. Desperate for food and shelter in the face of coming winter, they try to steal one of the fabled gem-encrusted gowns of the Lady of Jewels, the seldom-seen daughter and heir of Baron Silvertree, the most powerful (and cruel) Baron of Aglirta.

If they thought they were hunted and on the run before, they soon learn better. Every baron's hand is raised against them—and in Aglirta, the fingers of a baron's hand are every last wizard and most warriors, too.

Craer and Hawkril acquire Embra Silvertree and Sarasper Codelmer as companions in adventure, and they find themselves forced into a quest involving the Dwaerindim. Along the way, we see the fallen land of Aglirta, a setting rich in gaming possibilities.

The Dwaer-stones are irresistible to mages: In the world of Darsar (the setting for *The Kingless Land*), a wizard's ability to shape and work magic comes from within the caster, but its raw power is called forth from enchanted items. All items of lasting enchantment (holding more magic than the trifle gained by releasing a single spell stored in or cast upon them) are created by a spell that involves sacrificing the life of an accomplished wizard. The Dwaer are of this rare, permanent sort of enchanted item. If placed in a certain pattern, the stones awaken and call forth the Sleeping King. Placed in other arrays, they do other things—including calling up the King's age-old foe, the Serpent in the Shadows.

In Darsar, the power of healing drains the healer's life-force. Only a rare few humans are granted the gift to heal by the god Forefather Oak, so they are valuable—and usually held as captives by land-rulers.

We lack space to detail the Dwaer, Aglirta, and surrounding Darsar and its gods here, but we can look at the Four—as they are when *The Kingless Land* opens, before they truly flourish as adventurers. Though some of their talents vary slightly from AD&D® norms, these characters can readily serve as NPCs in any campaign.

Ed Greenwood is best known as the alter ego of such fantasy luminaries as Elminster the Sage and Volo the Traveler. His new fantasy series appears in stores this month, published by Tor books.

Craer Delnbone

7th-Level Human Thief

STRENGTH	14
DEXTERITY	18
CONSTITUTION	16
INTELLIGENCE	16
WISDOM	12
CHARISMA	14
AC	6 (Dexterity)
THAC0	17
HIT POINTS	31
ALIGNMENT	Chaotic neutral
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE	Nil
SIZE	M (5' tall)

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Short Sword, Strangle Wire (Garrotte).

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Appraising (16), Blind-fighting, Juggling (17), Set Snares (17), Tumbling (18).

Thief Abilities: PP 55%, OL 70%, F/RT 40%, MS 80%, HS 15%, DN 15%, CW 90%, RL 25%.

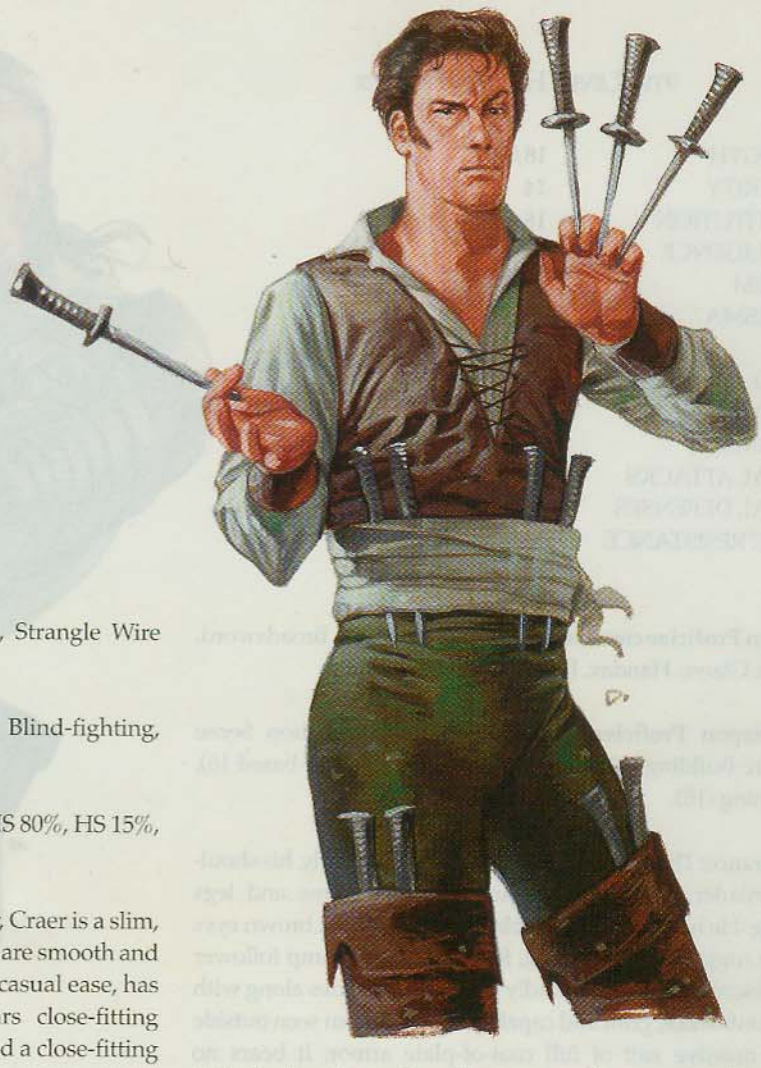
Appearance: Shortest and youngest of the Four, Craer is a slim, agile almost spiderlike man whose movements are smooth and graceful. He catches and throws daggers with casual ease, has "clever" good looks, and customarily wears close-fitting leather breeches, "swash-top" leather boots, and a close-fitting leather jerkin.

His build is slender his ribs rippling visibly when he stretches, his hair is light brown, and his eyes are blue-green.

Background: Craer is a thief or vagabond; while in military service, he bore the titles "lastalan" (scout and skirmisher, which is itself a polite name for "knife-murderer-by-night") and "procurer" (one who steals weapons, food, and conveyances for a baron's forces). He knows the Aglirtan backlands well and is also familiar with the back streets and alleys of the large and crowded city of Sirlptar.

A puny boy, unable to stand up to anyone in open combat, Craer learned to hide, misdirect, and steal after his parents were beaten and sold into slavery by a port pirate whom Craer resolved to slay—and did.

Equipment/Magical Items: Craer tries never to be without three things: sacks large enough to pop over heads and small enough to carry strapped under his clothing; many daggers hidden in his boots and within his garb; and potions of *healing* (usually carried in unbreakable vials in his boots). These last he steals or purchases whenever he can and hides them if he can't carry them; one can never have too many.



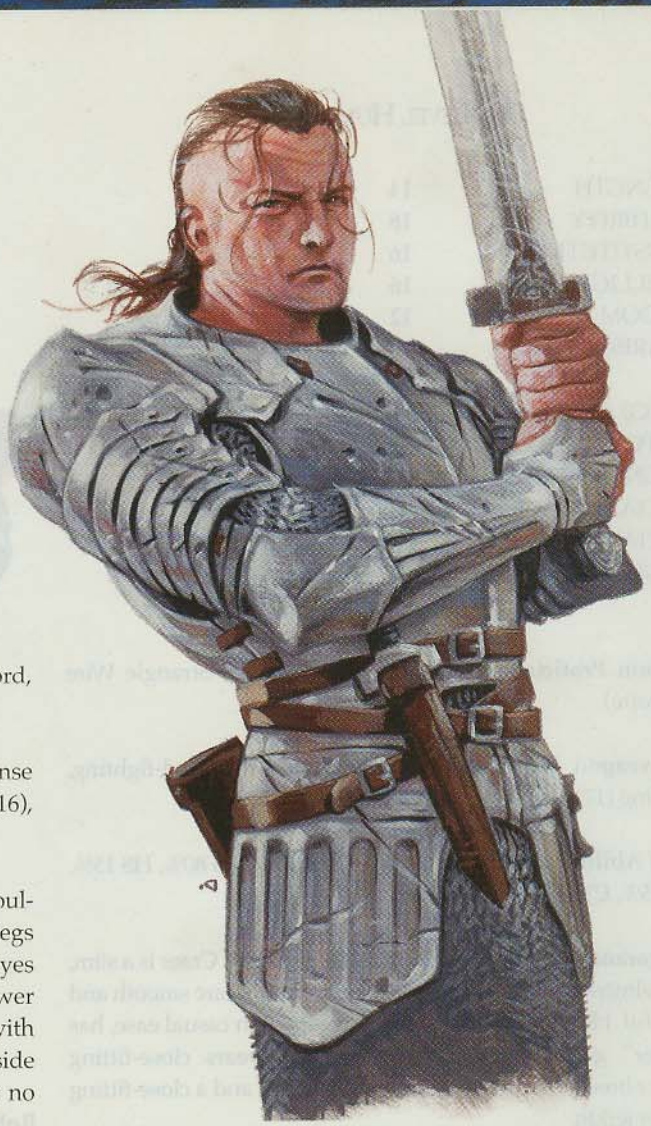
Roleplaying Notes: Craer has an overclever tongue; he's given to outrageous comments, biting sarcasm, and lying. At the same time, he's resourceful and merry, shrugging at adversity and accepting life as it comes. Danger is something to be faced without hesitation; if death ever beckons, why not go splendidly, fighting and striving? In the meantime, life is to be lived, from wenching to playing pranks—boredom and drudgery are the worst that can befall a man.

Though he might seem at times to use words as cutting weapons to keep folk at bay, Craer values his few friends very highly and will do almost anything to keep and to please them. He's affectionately called "Longfingers" by his closest friend, Hawkril, but isn't fond of the term. He isn't cruel, destructive, or overly greedy, but he enjoys the skulking, deft acrobatics, and trickery of thieving and is a formidable foe. Craer is the sort who will boldly defy hopeless odds or attempt something nigh-impossible—and usually succeed. How successful is he? Well, he's still alive. For a reckless gambler at the game of life, that's an achievement. Though he won't surrender or retreat before menaces that deter more prudent folk, Craer tries to be unpredictable. Those who try to goad him into traps will find that he dances sideways into bolder schemes rather than charging ahead.

Hawkril Anharu

9TH-LEVEL HUMAN FIGHTER

STRENGTH	18/36
DEXTERITY	14
CONSTITUTION	18
INTELLIGENCE	12
WISDOM	13
CHARISMA	15
AC	1
THAC0	12
HIT POINTS	79
ALIGNMENT	Lawful neutral
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE	Nil
SIZE	M (6 ½' tall)



Weapon Proficiencies: Bastard Sword, Battle-ax, Broadsword, Dagger, Glaive, Handax, Longsword.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, Direction Sense (14), Fire-Building (12), Hunting (12), Riding (Land-based 16), Swimming (18).

Appearance: The tallest of the Four, Hawkril is burly, his shoulders broader than those of most men, his arms and legs bulging. He has reddish skin, black hair, and dark brown eyes set in a rugged, good-natured, fearless face. (A camp follower once described him as a "kindly brute.") He strides along with quiet confidence, grim and capable, and is seldom seen outside of his massive suit of full coat-of-plate armor. It bears no heraldic device and is apt to be none too clean.

Background: Hawkril says little of his parentage and, in truth, might know little. Obviously of outland blood, he grew up an orphan in Blackgult, serving in the stables as a digger and hewer to the baronial household and later as a guard.

Over the years, he's become a veteran warrior, attaining the rank of cortahar (house guard), then armaragor (full knight, called "swordmaster" in some baronies). He once saved the life of his master, the Baron Blackgult, who promised to return the favor if Hawkril ever stood in such need.

Equipment/Magical Items: Hawkril's chief reward for loyal and attentive service was to be fitted for, and gifted with, his own suit of armor. It's his chief possession now and gives him an awesome, hulking appearance. His long, heavy warsword is also seldom far from his hand. It's of fearsome length and looks quite capable of what he can readily use it for—hacking his way through just about anything.

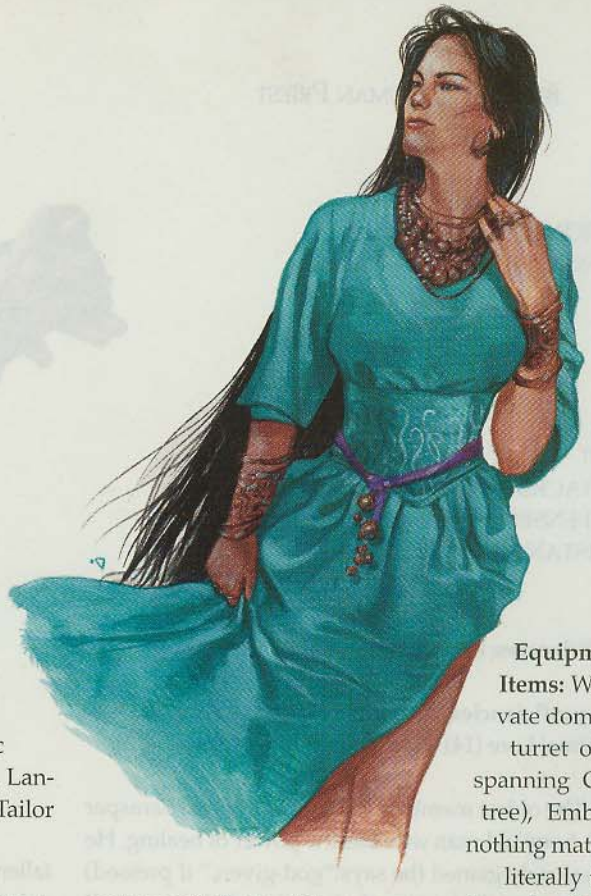
Roleplaying Notes: In his daily doings, Hawkril is the quiet voice of reason. Slow to anger and even slower to fear, short of words, and always apt to speak plain truth, he strikes most folk as grim but can be both tender and easy-going, especially among friends (of whom his closest is his longtime companion Craer Delnbone).

Hawkril is absolutely loyal and believes that keeping one's word, and standing by allies are the things that make life worth living. Priests and gods fail to help, or reveal deceitfulness and corruption, but sword-brothers in arms dare not cross each other and prefer to die rather than fail each other. Gods fail, but honest men prevail.

Hawkril feels guilty if he slights others or leaves them in danger or trapped, even unintentionally—but he can be merciless and brutal in a fight if need be. Craer affectionately calls him "Tall Post"; to Embra, he's "Tall-and-Mighty."

Hawkril isn't fond of gambling, wizards, or the sneering airs and graces of courtiers and those who think themselves better than folk around them. He's truly in awe of actors and bards whose performances enthrall him (and he will stare at such with all the wide-eyed wonder of a small child), but to Hawkril, even great talents or power don't grant anyone the right to be cruel, unjust, or deceitful. He sees magic and its misuse as the downfall of Aglirta, and would just as soon see all wizards in Darsar die or fly away, never to be seen again.

Lady Embra Silvertree



16th-Level Human Mage

STRENGTH	11
DEXTERITY	16
CONSTITUTION	13
INTELLIGENCE	18
WISDOM	16
CHARISMA	17
AC	8 (Dexterity)
THAC0	15
HIT POINTS	44
ALIGNMENT	Chaotic good
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Magic
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Magic
MAGIC RESISTANCE	Nil (44% within Silent House, Castle Silvertree)
SIZE	M (6½' tall)

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Dart, Staff.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Ancient History (17), Artistic Ability (16), Dancing (16), Etiquette (17), Heraldry (18), Languages (Ancient 18), Reading/Writing (19), Seamstress/Tailor (15), Spellcraft (16).

Appearance: Tall, slender, long-legged, and legendarily beautiful, the "Lady of Jewels" (so-called for her gem-encrusted gowns) is the sole heir of Baron Faerod Silvertree—and looks it, appearing rarely in public and always seeming calm, serene, and yet alert and imperious when she does. Her figure is shapely but sleek, her blue-black hair falls to the backs of her calves, and she has dark blue eyes that blaze very blue when she's angered. The Lady Embra customarily dresses stylishly, with rings on her fingers, expensive and sexy gowns that show her legs—upon which she usually wears a garter, both for decoration and to carry keys—and to emphasize her figure.

If aroused enough to hurl spells, the Lady Silvertree strides tall and terrible, with the witchlights of her risen power sparkling and swirling around her.

Background: Aglirtans think of the Lady of Jewels as the epitome of indolent luxury, living a life of idleness while they worry and toil. In truth, she's more of a prisoner, her life of seclusion enforced by her cruel father and his mages. Though she's a powerful sorceress and has come a very long way from the young, dreamy girl who was tricked into using magic—and thus revealing her aptitude for it—by one of her father's wily wizards, there are great gaps in her magical knowledge.

She's been trained to become a "Living Castle," magically bound from infancy to Castle Silvertree, to defend it and heal its inhabitants by drawing on its powers. She can feel things through its stones and reshape parts of its furnishings.

Equipment/Magical Items: Within her private domain (her own turret of the island-spanning Castle Silvertree), Embra lacks for nothing material. She has literally thousands of gowns and chests of loose gems and jewelry (the gemstones including rare bezrim, amblaers, starglisters, and peldoons). Her magic is far more limited (her father's mages don't want a rival or effective foe), but whenever she can she carries about on her person small enchanted knickknacks that she can drain to power her spells. (Given enough outside power, a Darsar mage can cast the same spell repeatedly.)

Roleplaying Notes: Fearless and calm when angry, though she might tremble with excitement, Embra Silvertree might well be the smartest woman in Aglirta, as well as the most beautiful. Stunned as a young child (when she saw her father's true, evil nature for the first time), she strove to hide her growing hatred for him, remaining controlled and obedient through the years as her father's mages trained her as brutally as a whip-wielding trainer might break a rebellious stallion. What sustained Embra over the years was her love of learning, particularly magic, which fascinates her so much that she'll ignore imminent danger to "read on," learning just one more spell....

Increasingly restless as her bindings grow stronger and the time approaches when she'll be slain in a magical ritual that will deprive her forever of a body and link her undying sentience to the Castle itself, Embra finds herself changed by her pent-up fury. It makes her take pleasure in slaying foes and drives her to defy her father at last. When a chance for freedom comes, she snatches it and flees, pausing only once:

Glaring, nostrils flaring in fury, she said softly, "I know you can hear me, Father. Know this: I have had my fill of being used. Henceforth, watch for me—and fear my coming."

Sarasper Codelmer

8TH-LEVEL HUMAN PRIEST

STRENGTH	15
DEXTERITY	16
CONSTITUTION	18
INTELLIGENCE	15
WISDOM	17
CHARISMA	10
AC	10 (3)
THAC0	16 (13)
HIT POINTS	66
ALIGNMENT	Neutral good
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Magic, shape shifting
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Magic, shape shifting
MAGIC RESISTANCE	Nil
SIZE	M (5 ½' tall) (three other shapes)

Weapon Proficiencies: Knife, Club, Handax, Sling.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Ancient History (14), Animal Handling (16), Animal Lore (14), Healing (15), Local History (10).

Appearance: The oldest member of the Band of Four, Sarasper is a sad-faced, bony old man who has the power of healing. He has the mysteriously gained (he says "god-given," if pressed) ability to change his shape into that of a small bat, a small snake, or a fearsome beast—a "longfangs" (see below). In all of his forms, the old healer's eyes are a golden hue.

In his human form, Sarasper has thin white hair, a jutting, white and gray-stubbled chin, bristling white eyebrows, and hands that are spotted and dark-veined with age. His clothes are old, battered tunics and smocks, over patched, salvaged breeches, and shapeless boots.

The longfangs is a deadly predator of humans and other large beasts. It looks like a spider cloaked in the reddish to gray shaggy pelt and lean, rippling muscles of a wolf. It has the jawed head of a giant wolf, and two of its spiderlike forelimbs also sport little rending jaws; the others are barbed at the joints with bone-spurs that jut out from the "elbows" of each leg-joint, resembling gigantic rose-thorns more than anything else. For game purposes, treat a longfangs as a neogi (refer to the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ book) with 8 Hit Dice, MV 12 (Cl 8), no magic, but with slowing poison, SZ L.

Background: A longtime companion of Craer during the years in the service of Blackgult, Sarasper was hunted for his healing powers as a youth. Traditionally, Aglirtan barons have kept healers as chained slaves to heal upon command. But healing flows through the healer's body, it ages and wears it out, so one who has no chance to limit the use of his or her powers will probably die young.

Fearing this fate, Sarasper eventually fled Blackgult after years of loyal service keeping his special abilities hidden, wherein he learned much about Sirlptar and the baronies of fallen Aglirta. For years he's hidden in an abandoned, cursed palace, the Silent House, retreating to its trap-filled catacombs whenever strongly armed parties have come exploring, and emerging only at night, in beast-shape, to hunt. He's grown very tired of raw meat.

His price for healing Craer, Hawkril, and Embra is their aid in the quest that's been gnawing at him (sent in dreams by Forefather Oak, the patron of all healers): to recover four long-lost enchanted stones, the Dwaerindim, and place them in such a way as to awaken the Sleeping King, who will rise to restore peace and bounty to the land. The rest of the Four think this is just a legend.

Equipment/Magical Items: Sarasper has collected oddments of magic from tombs and some enchanted knickknacks to power spells; he can call on all sorts of furnishings and items when in the Silent House, but he owns very little.

Roleplaying Notes: A dabbler in magics and a cynic to the core, Sarasper is a sarcastic, suspicious old man ruled by his fear of capture—until, very recently, his god began to speak to him. Whispering in his mind, sending him urges and dream-visions, the god gave Sarasper a new life and purpose.

Sarasper is usually gruff and sarcastic when he speaks; his eyes blaze and he falls silent when communing with Forefather Oak.

The old healer is determined to redeem what he sees as a wasted, stunted life by accomplishing the task Forefather Oak is urging him toward. If, that is, the whisperings in his mind are coming from the god, and not someone else....

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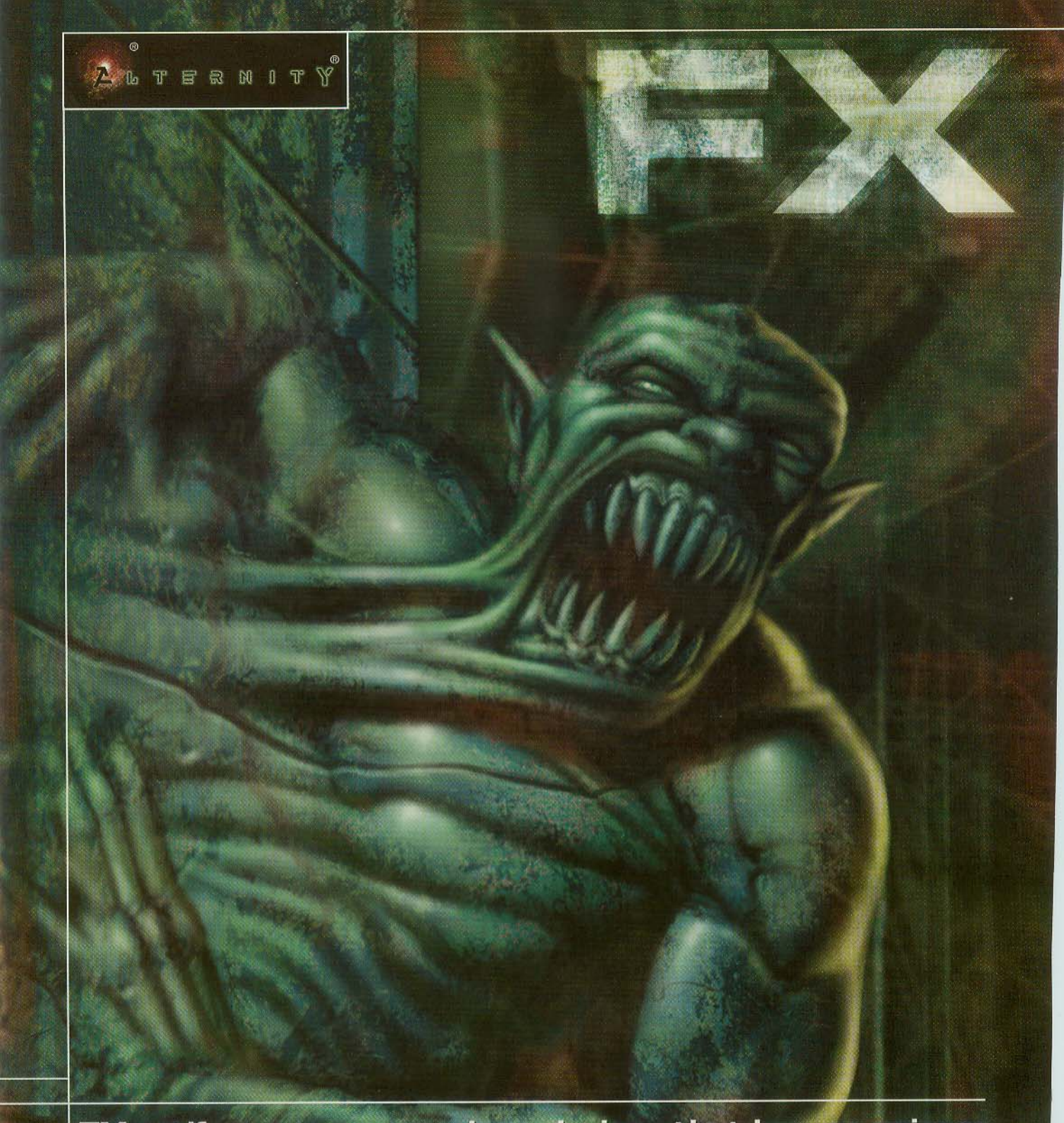


FX artifacts are mysterious devices that human science can neither explain nor duplicate. They might be ancient objects created by an arcane society, holy relics of a divinity, or strange superscience gadgets from another dimension.

Artifacts

by Sean K. Reynolds & Andy Collins

illustrated by Marc Sasso

FX artifacts are usually related to a particular type of FX (Arcane Magic, Faith, or Super Power), and they take the same role in a campaign as do alien artifacts—either as a perk, a flaw, or a story device for the Gamemaster.

To design an FX artifact, use the procedure for designing an alien artifact (see Chapter 12 in the *Gamemaster Guide*), but use **Tables 1** and **2** from this article instead of Table G55: Artifact Powers and Table G56: Artifact Drawbacks from the *Gamemaster Guide*, respectively.

FX Artifact Powers

The italicized FX artifact powers in **Table 1** are unique to this article. All others are described in Chapter 12: Alien Artifacts in the *Gamemaster Guide*.

Animation

The device can temporarily imbue an object with sentience and limited mobility, creating a creature under the control of the artifact's wielder.

This creature acts like an elemental of the type appropriate to the material from which the object is formed (that is, solid = earth, liquid = water, gas = air, and energy = fire). The object (or volume, for nonsolid substances) must be of approximately 1.5 cubic meters; animated solid objects that are part of a larger object cannot pull themselves free from their parent object and remain rooted in place. The object to be animated must be within 50 meters of the artifact at all times; it falls inert if this distance is exceeded. The animation otherwise lasts 1 hour. Statistics for elementals are found in Chapter 6: FX Creatures in *Beyond Science: A Guide to FX*.

Unlike standard elementals, which require a "pure" or "natural" substance for their creation, an artifact can animate artificial or refined substances such as brick, metal, gasoline, or chlorine gas. Such materials result in a stronger or weaker elemental, at the Gamemaster's discretion.

Ordinary: The device can animate liquid or gaseous material.

Good: The device can animate solid material.

Amazing: The device can animate manifestations of energy (fire, electricity, radiation, and so on).

Dimensional Contact

The device can transcend dimensional boundaries, allowing communication with beings in other dimensions.

Normally, the device is limited to one or more specific dimensions, such as a "hell" (where demons reside), the spirit world (of shamans, voodoo, or other similar faiths), a "heaven" (where angels reside), or parallel universes (such as those described in the ALTERNITY® game supplement *Tangents*).

The communication ability of the device might have been intended as a beacon to beings from one of the targeted dimensions, a means of offering advice, or a key to subverting the will of its user. The item's purpose determines what sort of interactions the bearer has with the beings on the other side. Note that the receiver for the artifact's signals could be a specific creature or something like a computer station. In the latter case, there might be nobody present when the hero activates the call. The form of communication the device provides could be empathic, audial, visual and audial, or even telepathic, at the Gamemaster's discretion; the communication has a maximum duration of 10 minutes.

If keyed toward a particular sort of FX available to the user (for example, if the device contacts a "hell" and the user is a diabolist), the device makes it easier to contact the user's supernatural patrons or their native dimension, giving a bonus to any FX skill checks of that type that involve communicating with a being from that dimension. (A diabolist, for example, would gain a bonus to Diabolism–*summoning* or *tongue of the damned*, for example, but not *hellfire* or *rend the weave*.)

Ordinary: The device can contact one specific dimension and gives a –1 step bonus to FX skill checks of the appropriate type. It can be used once per week.

Good: The device can contact two specific dimensions and gives a –2 step bonus to FX skill checks of the appropriate type. It can be used once per day.

Amazing: The device can contact three specific dimensions, giving a –3 step bonus to FX skill checks of the appropriate type. It can also contact other dimensions specified by the user but gives only a –1 step bonus to FX skill checks involving such dimensions. It can be used once per hour.

Dimensional Travel

The artifact allows the user to move to another dimension.

Unlike the Dimensional Shift artifact power, this ability connects to a complete reality, and travel to it does not revert after time. (The user must activate the device again to return.) The user is not guaranteed protection from the dimension's native environment; for example, the native dimension of demons is not a friendly place, and heroes who go there are at risk from pools of burning brimstone or the local lifeforms.

As with the *dimensional contact* artifact power, most devices of this type are tuned to a specific dimension, although many allow travel to nearby parallel universes (see *Tangents* for more information on this topic); the device can also be used to return to the user's native dimension. The portal created

Table 1: FX Artifact Powers

Communication (d6)

1	Cyberconscious
2	*Dimensional contact*
3	Empathy
4	Star transceiver
5	Telepathy
6	*Speak with plants*

Control (d6)

1	Cybercontrol
2	Dark matter control
3	*FX control*
4	Kinetic control
5	*Plant control*
6	Probability control

Defense (d6)

1	Armor
2	Displacement
3	Energy dispersal
4	*FX dispersal*
5	Kinetic dispersal
6	*Spirit shield*

Environmental (d6)

1	*FX manipulation*
2	Magnetic control
3	Molecular manipulation
4	Photonic manipulation
5	*Spirit ward*
6	Stealth field

Information (d6)

1	Analysis
2	*FX detector*
3	*FX lore*
4	Omnidata computer
5	Precognition
6	Postcognition

Medical (d6)

1	*FX battery*
2	*FX rejuvenator*
3	Healing touch
4	Immortality
5	Regenerator
6	Resuscitator

Mental Enhancement (d6)

1	*FX grafting*
2	*Heightened FX skill*
3	Heightened Intelligence
4	Heightened Personality
5	Heightened Will
6	Multitasking

Offense (d6)

1	Anti-life ray
2	Dark matter attack
3	Disintegration field
4	*FX energy attack*
5	*FX feedback attack*
6	Gravity generation

Physical Enhancement (d6)

1	*FX grafting*
2	*Heightened FX skill*
3	Heightened Constitution
4	Heightened Dexterity
5	Heightened Strength
6	Hyper adaptation

Transmutation (d8)

1	*Animation*
2	Elemental conversion
3	*Molecular conversion*
4	Molecular transformation
5	Oxidation/reduction
6	*Shape alteration*
7	*Size alteration*
8	Virtual matter creation

Transportation (d6)

1	Carrier wave
2	Dimensional shift
3	*Dimensional travel*
4	*Flight*
5	Time travel
6	Teleportation

by the artifact is temporary, closing when the user desires or automatically after a certain amount of time; if the portal remains open, it can be used by other creatures.

Some of these devices are attuned to a spirit world where shamans, vodun, or the like contact the spirits of their faiths. Shamanic devices of this type do not actually transport the user to the spirit world but immediately shift the user's consciousness there (effectively giving the shaman an Amazing trance immediately); the shaman can wake from the trance normally. Voodoo artifacts allow the houngan to bypass having a ceremony to contact the loa; the houngan should still use the sacrifices appropriate to the desired loa. (The artifact takes the place of the ceremony, contacting the loa instantly and allowing the houngan to offer the sacrifices.) The portals created by these artifacts allow the user to take advantage of their benefits for as long as the portal is open, repeatedly accessing the spirit world without extensive preparation.

Ordinary: The device can transport to one other dimension and back again. It can be used once per day, with its portal remaining open for 1 round.

Good: The device can transport to two other dimensions and back again. It can be used once every 12 hours, with its portal remaining open for 1 minute.

Amazing: The device can be tuned to open a portal to any nearby dimension, is usable once every 4 hours, and creates a portal that remains open for 10 minutes.

Flight

The artifact allows the user to fly.

It offers no protection from the environment (so flying into space or underwater requires appropriate equipment) but does protect against the normal hazards of flying at high speed (such as sonic booms and wind). Once activated, flying requires no actions, and the hero can move without penalty in any direction up to the device's maximum speed. The flying hero moves at the speed and with the maneuverability of a vehicle, the type depending upon the power level of the artifact; it can be used for up to 1 hour per day.

Ordinary: The hero flies as well as a helicopter.

Good: The hero flies as well as a private jet.

Amazing: The hero flies as well as a skycar.

FX Battery

The device has a reservoir of FX energy that can be tapped by its user.

The FX energy points can be keyed to a particular type of FX or can be available to anyone with FX abilities. The device's energy replenishes itself automatically without input from the user.

Ordinary: The device has 2 FX energy points and renews them at a rate of one every 12 hours.

Good: The device has 4 FX energy points and renews them at a rate of one every 6 hours.

Amazing: The device has 6 FX energy points and renews them at a rate of one every 4 hours.

FX Control

The device dampens or heightens a target's ability to draw upon FX energy.

If set to dampen, any FX usage by the target costs one additional FX energy point. If set to heighten, any FX usage by the target costs one fewer FX energy point (with a minimum of 1 point). The artifact affects only one creature at a time, and the target must be in range and in sight at the time of activation. The user cannot target himself or herself with the device.

Ordinary: The device has a range of 20 meters and can be used once per day, lasting 1 minute per use.

Good: The device's range is 50 meters and can be used twice per day, lasting 5 minutes per use.

Amazing: The device's range is 100 meters and can be used three times per day, lasting 10 minutes per use.

FX Detector

The device can detect the use of FX in its vicinity.

This information might be conveyed to the user by a number of means, depending upon the form of the artifact: a sword might vibrate, a holy symbol might grow cold, a high-tech helmet might use a blip on an HUD, and so on. The device functions automatically and does not need to be activated. The device can detect only one category of FX (arcane, faith, or super power) or even one type within that category (diabolism, necromancy, and so on); whether or not it can differentiate between the categories and types is up to the Gamemaster. (Different FX might show up as different colors on the helmet's HUD, for example.)

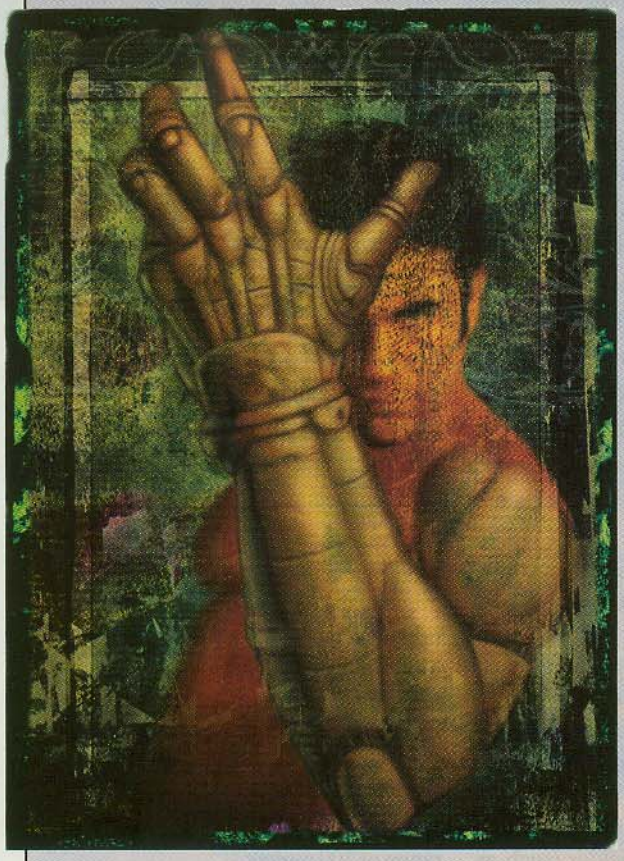
Ordinary: The device has a range of 10 meters and detects the use of FX (such as casting a spell) or existing FX (active spells and FX devices, among others).

Good: As above, but the device has a range of 40 meters and detects creatures that use FX (even if they aren't currently doing so).

Amazing: As above, but the device has a range of 100 meters and detects creatures that have the potential to use FX (in regard to FX that require an innate talent, rather than the sort that anyone could use with sufficient training).

Arm of Talos

Form: Graft/implant (left arm)
Purpose: Offense, Mental Enhancement
Powers: Gravity Generation (A); Multitasking (G).
Drawbacks: Possession (M); FX Vulnerability (S).



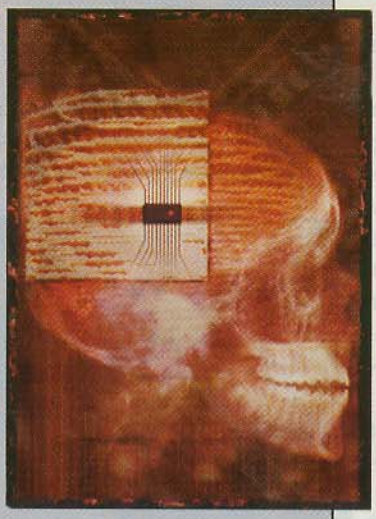
Reputed to have been crafted from the remains of a bronze giant, the Arm of Talos is a solid left arm of bronze that magically affixes itself to the shoulder of any humanoid creature that has lost its left arm. When affixed, the arm functions just like a normal limb, with additional powers noted below.

The arm's primary offensive power is its powerful gravitic control. With a successful Modern Ranged Weapons–*rifle* skill check, the arm's controller can move a living creature up to 10, 20, or 30 meters in any direction (depending on the success of the skill check). No skill check is necessary to use the power on inanimate objects. A clever user can devise many interesting strategies with this power; in general, damage inflicted through the use of this ability (such as by dropping or throwing an enemy) will be equivalent to the damage suffered by a fall. (See Chapter 3 of the *Gamemaster Guide*.) This power can manipulate a single object of up to 2,000 kg at a range of 200 meters and can function for up to 12 phases per 24 hours.

Still inhabited by a portion of the spirit of the bronze giant, the Arm of Talos possesses a rudimentary sentience. This allows its wearer to perform unrelated actions with both hands at no penalty and grants a –2 step bonus to action checks. Unfortunately, the artifact also has the capability of taking over the mind of its user. Whenever the hero wearing the Arm uses the gravity generation power for more than 2 phases in any 60-minute period, the sentience awakens and attempts to possess the hero. Its possession skill score is 14; the hero's Will resistance modifier applies. While it possesses the hero's body, the Arm causes the hero to act in a crude and violent fashion, insulting friends and brutalizing anyone who questions the affected individual. The possessed hero can make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check every hour to regain control.

As a side effect of its creation through unknown alchemical processes, the Arm of Talos bestows a particular vulnerability to Hermeticism Arcane Magic FX to its wielder. Any hero wearing the arm suffers a –2 penalty to his or her resistance modifiers versus that form of Arcane Magic FX (or grants a –2 step bonus to Hermeticism skill checks used against the wearer, if no resistance modifier applies).

Methuselan Cortex



Form: Implant (head)
Purpose: Medical
Powers: Immortality (O).
Drawbacks: FX Energy Leech (M); Infamous Device (S).

This legendary nanocomputer interacts with the hero's body in such a way as to drastically reduce the body's aging process. Once it has been installed, the hero ages at only one-fifth the normal rate. In addition, the hero gains a –2 step bonus to any Stamina–*endurance* skill checks caused by mortal damage.

The Methuselan Cortex does not have its own power supply; instead, at a randomly determined time during each day, it drains 2 FX energy points from a nearby target (or 2 wound points if no nearby target has FX energy points). If no targets exist within 30 meters, it drains from its user instead.

This artifact's power is desired by many, for obvious reasons. Every two to three adventures, the hero using the Methuselan Cortex should encounter those interested in "liberating" it from the hero, with or without employing a surgical process.

FX Dispersal

When the wielder is struck by a direct application of FX, the artifact negates some or all of the damage.

The artifact's absorbent power is taken into account before armor rolls.

The FX must be applied directly at the wielder and not at another object that then affects the wielder. For example, this power would affect any FX attack that launches energy at the wielder (such as Diabolism–*hellfire* or Necromancy–*life drain*), but would not protect against mundane attacks from a demon summoned by FX. Similarly, the wielder would be protected if a pyromancer used the *immolation* spell on him or her, but not if the person walked into a burning shack that was ignited with a *fiery bolt* spell.

Ordinary: The device dissipates 4 points of damage; 20 points can be dissipated each day.

Good: The device dissipates 6 points of damage; 30 points can be dissipated each day.

Amazing: The device dissipates 8 points of damage; 40 points can be dissipated each day.

FX Energy Attack

The device can fire a bolt of FX energy.

The type of FX energy depends upon the artifact and resembles one of the types of FX (diabolism, necromancy, thaumaturgy, super power energy, and so on); any resistance or vulnerability the target has toward that sort of energy applies to this attack. Aiming the device depends upon the specialty skill (*pistol, rifle,* or *SMG*) appropriate to the device's form.

Ordinary: The device inflicts 2d4s/2d4w/d6m of En/O damage and has a range of 50 meters.

Good: The device inflicts 3d4s/3d4w/2d4m of En/G damage and has a range of 100 meters.

Amazing: The device inflicts 3d4s/3d4w/2d4m of En/A damage and has a range of 200 meters.

FX Feedback Attack

The device emits a beam that causes a harmful resonance in the target whenever FX energy is used.

For the duration of the effect, the target suffers damage every time he or she spends FX energy; this damage cannot be reduced by armor or defensive devices (although defense against FX will work). Most of these devices only work against one category of FX (arcane, faith, or super power). The duration of the effect and the damage from the feedback (per point of FX energy the target spends) depends upon the power level of the artifact; it is considered En/O damage.

Ordinary: The effect lasts 1 minute and causes d4s.

Good: The effect lasts 10 minutes and causes d4w.

Amazing: The effect lasts 1 hour and causes d4w and 1m.

FX Grafting

The device duplicates the ability of one or more FX specialty skills, allowing the wielder to use these skills as if they were his or her own.

The artifact provides the FX energy to activate the skill, while the user provides the intent. Any negative consequences of using the device's skills (such as damage from a diabolism item, possible possession from a voodoo item, backfires from a pyromantic item, and so on) are suffered by the user. The wielder cannot use the item's FX broad skill to use FX specialty skills unavailable to the device.

Ordinary: The device has one FX broad skill and one FX specialty skill of that type at rank 3. It can be used once per day.

Good: The device has one FX broad skill, with one specialty skill of that type at rank 6 and one at rank 3. It can be used three times per day (in any combination of the two specialty skills).

Amazing: The device has one FX broad skill, with one specialty skill of that type at rank 9, one at rank 6, and one at rank 3. It can be used five times per day (in any combination of the three specialty skills).

FX Lore

The device is a storehouse of information on a particular FX broad skill and its specialty skills. It is considered to have the Knowledge and Teach specialty skills appropriate to that type of FX. The rank and skill score depends on the power level of the device.

Ordinary: The device has a rank of 4 (skill score 12) in Knowledge and Teach for the FX broad skill and its specialty skills.

Good: The device has a rank of 8 (skill score 16) in Knowledge and Teach.

Amazing: The device has a rank of 12 (skill score 20) in Knowledge and Teach.

FX Manipulation

The device can emit a field that enhances or inhibits FX abilities.

All FX users within the field gain a bonus or penalty to their FX skill rolls while the device is active. More powerful

artifacts might (at the Gamemaster's discretion) be able to modulate the field to enhance one type of FX while inhibiting another.

Ordinary: The device gives a +2 or –2 modifier to all FX skill rolls within 10 meters of it.

Good: The device gives a +3 or –3 modifier to all FX skill rolls within 30 meters of it.

Amazing: The device gives a +4 or –4 modifier to all FX skill rolls within 60 meters of it.

FX Rejuvenator

The device enhances the recovery of FX energy.

Resolve–Not only do the intervals for making *mental resolve* or *physical resolve* become shorter, the total time needed without FX expenditure needed to recover all FX (8 hours for most characters) becomes shorter. The device can give this benefit only to its bearer, and it must be held, worn, or otherwise be within 1 meter of the user for a 24 hour period to provide this power.

Ordinary: The time intervals are reduced to one-half of their current amount.

Good: The time intervals are reduced to one-third of their current amount.

Amazing: The time intervals are reduced to one-fourth of their current amount.

Heightened FX Skill

The device is attuned toward one FX broad skill.

If the wielder is able to use that sort of FX, the skill rolls for that broad skill and its specialty skills are made with a step bonus.

Ordinary: The device provides a –1 step bonus.

Good: The device provides a –2 step bonus.

Amazing: The device provides a –3 step bonus.

Molecular Conversion

Less limited than the Elemental Conversion power, this can convert simple or complex compounds, mixtures, and amalgams into others in the same state (solid, liquid, or gas).

Depending on the power of the artifact, atmospheric air (a mixture of several elemental gases and chemical compounds) can be changed to poisonous fumes; water can be changed to alcohol, milk, gasoline, or acid; wood can be changed to flesh, stone, or metal. It can be used once per day. This change is temporary, and the object is unharmed when it returns to its original form. (Alterations or damage suffered during the transformed state carries over to the new form.) A living creature can resist the effect with a Stamina–*endurance* roll.

Ordinary: The device has a range of 5 meters and can convert up to 1,000 cubic meters of gas. The change lasts 10 minutes.

Good: The device has a range of 10 meters and can convert up to 100 kg of liquid. The change lasts 30 minutes.

Amazing: The device has a range of 30 meters and can convert up to 200 kg of solid material. The change lasts 1 hour.

Plant Control

The device has a telekinetic affinity for plant life and can cause plants to bend, twist, and grasp anything within its range.

Short plants can slow movement by 25%, tall ones by 50%, and shrubbery and trees can stop it completely. The plants retain their normal material strength, so they can be cut or broken normally. (Making progress through high or low grass usually entails breaking the numerous stalks grasping at the target's limbs). The plants can also be directed to bend into a particular shape (allowing ease of climbing, leaning over a gorge, and so forth) or release their fruit, nuts, or pollen. The effect lasts 10 minutes; flexible plants revert to their previous positions, while rigid ones (such as trees, cacti, and the like) retain their altered orientations.

Ordinary: The device can affect up to 50 kg of plant matter within a 10-meter radius of the device.

Good: The device can affect up to 100 kg of plant matter within a 20-meter radius.

Amazing: The device can affect up to 500 kg of plant matter within a 50-meter radius.

Spirit Circlet

Form: Clothing (headgear)
Purpose: Defense, Communication
Powers: Spirit Shield (G); Dimensional Contact (O).
Drawbacks: Mental instability (E); Energy Cost (S).

This tarnished silver circlet was once worn by religious leaders who used its powers to communicate with beings they perceived as "angels," as well as to protect them from evil spirits.

The artifact adds +2 to its wearer's resistance modifier against attacks by spirit creatures (including all possession attacks). Also, it grants empathic communication with an alternate dimension inhabited by powerful (and generally beneficent) beings. Such communication lasts no more than 10 minutes and can be performed no more than once per week. The user typically receives feelings of right or wrong about future plans, or premonitions of potential danger.

At the Gamemaster's discretion, this dimension might be inhabited by the beings who empower users of Enochian Arcane Magic FX and Monotheism Faith FX, thus granting a –1 step bonus to skill checks of those two broad skills that rely on communication with such beings.

The Spirit Circlet has two drawbacks that make its use hazardous. Communication with the alternate dimension draws energy directly from the wearer, causing him or her 1 point of stun damage per minute of communication. Also, any use of the *dimensional contact* power forces the wearer to make a Resolve–*mental resolve* skill check at a +3 step penalty or be afflicted with mental instability, as described in Chapter 12 of the *Gamemaster Guide*.

Tome of the Eye

Form: Carried device (book)
Purpose: Information
Powers: FX Lore (G); Precognition (O).
Drawbacks: Degeneration (S).

This thick, gray book appears to be stitched from the hide of an unidentifiable creature, with a single open eye set into the front cover. It bears no title or other markings, and its pages appear blank at first. However, if its possessor stands before it (or holds it) and asks a question relating to the topic noted below, the Tome reveals its powers.

The Tome of the Eye is a full of information on Alienism Faith FX, including the strange extradimensional beings associated with that faith. It has the equivalent of rank 8 (skill score 16) in Knowledge–*alienism* and Teach–*adept* (Alienism Faith FX only). When in use, the book flips open to a page holding the desired answer or lesson, then closes again. There is no other way to read from the book.

In addition, the book has precognitive powers. At the Gamemaster's discretion (and at an appropriate time in a game session), the Tome of the Eye flips open to a random page, revealing a rough scene of an event in the possessor's future. The hero has only a few seconds to look at the image (which will be hazy and somewhat unclear) before the book slams shut again. The hero can make an Awareness–*intuition* check (with a –2 step bonus) to comprehend the scene, as described in Chapter 12 of the *Gamemaster Guide.*

The Tome of the Eye has a deleterious effect upon those who possess it. Each month, the owner of the book must make a Constitution feat check to avoid being infected with a disease of Ordinary incubation (2d4 days). Note that the book need not be in the hero's presence during this time to have this effect.

Shape Alteration

The device can alter the shape of a target nonliving object as if it were putty under the telepathic guidance of the user.

The artifact could reform a bent airlock door, create holes in walls, bend wooden planks, reshape a concrete floor, and so on. Transforming an object takes a full round, and matter is neither created nor destroyed with this power, although pieces can be separated from a whole during the transformation process. The transformed object retains its original material strength unless its new form indicates otherwise. (For example, a steel girder reformed into a metal mesh will be easier to damage.) Altering the shape of gaseous or liquid "objects" lasts only as long as the user concentrates, with the "object" succumbing to gravity, pressure, and temperature as soon as the user stops concentrating. The device can be used in this manner once per day.

Ordinary: The device can affect up to 100 kg of material and has a range of 10 meters.

Good: The device can affect up to 500 kg of material and has a range of 25 meters.

Amazing: The device can affect up to 1,000 kg of material and has a range of 50 meters.

Size Alteration

The device can radically increase or decrease the size of an object.

The object's mass does not remain constant; an enlarged object is partially made up of virtual matter, whereas a reduced object has its extra mass shunted extradimensionally. The altered object otherwise retains its normal material strength, although electronic and mechanical components might malfunction or simply not work if operated at a size for which they were not engineered. (For example, a gasoline explosion in an engine will have a hard time moving a piston that is twice its original size.) The virtual matter is largely inert, so enlarging a package of plastic explosive will not result in a bigger explosion, and an engine running on enlarged gasoline will run less efficiently (as if the fuel were diluted).

The power can be used once per day, and the size alteration takes a full round. At the end of the duration, the object reverts to its original size over the course of a full round. If a reduced object is placed in a space smaller than its normal size and allowed to revert, it will expand as much as possible to regain its normal size and, depending upon the strength of the affected object and its container, either damage the cause of its confinement or crumple. A similar effect occurs if an object is enlarged within a small space or an item is reduced around another object, such as a battle vest around a person.

Ordinary: The device can enlarge or reduce up to 50 kg of materials by a factor of 50%. The change lasts 10 minutes.

Good: The device can enlarge or reduce up to 100 kg of materials by a factor of 100%. The change lasts 30 minutes.

Amazing: The device can enlarge or reduce up to 200 kg of materials by a factor of 200%. The change lasts 1 hour.

Speak with Plants

The device can read the limited sensory impressions that plant life draws from its surroundings and telepathically translate this information into something its wielder can understand.

Essentially, this is a specialized form of the psionic skills ESP–*postcognition* and *psychometry* that works only in the presence of living plant matter.

Ordinary: The device has a range of 10 meters and can read impressions up to 6 hours old.

Good: The device has a range of 50 meters and can read impressions up to 12 hours old.

Amazing: The device has a range of 200 meters and can read impressions up to 24 hours old.

Spirit Shield

The device increases the user's resistance modifier against spirit creatures (such as shamanic spirits, voodoo spirits, ghosts, demons without physical form, and so forth).

The user receives the bonus when being attacked with physical, mental, or FX attacks from the spirits (including

possession attempts). The user gains a +1, +2, or +3 resistance modifier against spirit creatures for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing power, respectively.

Spirit Ward

The device can create an area which is painful for spirits.

Bodiless supernatural entities (such as shamanic or voodoo spirits, or ghosts) can enter the area only if they make a Stamina–*resist pain* roll, and must make another roll every round they remain there. (Failure means the spirit flees the area, possibly even returning to its home dimension.) This roll is modified by the power level of the artifact, as are all actions attempted by the spirit while within the area.

Creatures possessed by any spirit (including helpful ones) are also affected by the Spirit Ward, but they have a –2 bonus on their Stamina *resist–pain* roll (the host entity must make the roll if the spirit is not given any statistics); this modifier can only negate a penalty, not provide a bonus. Possessed creatures that fail their roll do their best to leave the area; a friendly possessing spirit abandons its host if the host does not leave, while a hostile possessing spirit threatens its host to get the field deactivated (preferring to kill its host than simply be driven away).

Ordinary: The field affects all spirits within 10 meters of the device and gives a +1 penalty to all rolls made by the spirits in the area. It can operate for up to 10 minutes per day.

Good: The field affects all spirits within 30 meters of the device and gives a +2 penalty to all rolls made by the spirits in the area. It can operate for up to 1 hour per day.

Amazing: The field affects all spirits within 100 meters of the user and gives a +3 penalty to all rolls made by the spirits in the area. It can operate for up to 6 hours per day.

FX Artifact Drawbacks

As with FX artifact powers, FX artifact drawbacks in italics indicate new drawbacks described in this book. All other drawbacks are described in Chapter 12 in the *Gamemaster Guide*.

Any artifact with a drawback listed in **Table 2** with an asterisk (*) functions only for a hero with an active FX energy pool. The artifact does not function for a hero without an FX energy pool or one whose entire FX energy pool is used maintaining permanent Super Power FX powers (that is, the hero has no "open" FX energy points to spend).

Depletes Materials

The device requires rare, exotic, or expensive materials to function (either as fuel or as an offering to whatever entity created it).

Any items given to the device are converted to common materials (if fuel) or are completely lost (if an offering). The device consumes $100, $500, or $1,000 worth of materials (depending upon the level of the drawback) every time it is activated by the user. These values are in real-world PL 5 terms; adjust values accordingly for campaigns where prices are higher or lower. Suitable materials include gemstones, precious metals, exotic plants or animals, or electronic devices. Alternatively, it might degrade larger amounts of nonprecious materials (such as common plants, metals, or asphalt), leaving behind brittle husks or serious structural damage in the immediate area depending upon the material consumed.

FX Energy Cost

The device does not have its own supply of FX energy; the user must spend his or her own FX energy points to activate it.

The use of any power requires 1, 2, or 3 FX energy points (depending upon the level of the drawback).

FX Energy Leech

Like the Leech drawback, the artifact randomly selects a nearby creature (which might be the user) with FX and drains FX energy from it; if no such creatures are available (including the user), it will strike out at a random creature and drain wound points.

In either case, it causes a loss of 1, 2, or 3 FX energy points (or wound points) depending upon the level of the drawback (Slight, Moderate, or Extreme).

FX Inhibitor

The device inhibits the user's ability to recover FX energy.

Table 2: FX Artifact Drawbacks

d20	Drawback
1	Blackouts
2	Compulsory Behavior
3	Dampening Field
4	*Depletes Materials*
5	*Decreased Ability*
6	Degeneration
7	Disruptive Consciousness
8	Energy Cost
9	*FX Energy Cost**
10	*FX Energy Leech**
11	*FX Inhibitor**
12	*FX Vulnerability*
13	*Hostile Consciousness*
14	Infamous Device
15	Leech
16	Mental Instability
17	*Possession*
18	Power Spike
19	*Spirit Prison*
20	Uncontrolled Function

Once the device has become attuned to the user (usually by the user activating one of its powers), it doubles, triples, or quadruples the amount of time between FX energy recovery checks and the amount of rest needed to fully recover FX energy.

FX Vulnerability

The device and its user are vulnerable to one type of FX (diabolism, shamanism, and so on).

The user has a –2, –3, or –4 resistance modifier against a specific type of FX.

Hostile Consciousness

The device is self-aware and generally hostile toward anything that isn't its creator.

Much like the Uncontrolled Function drawback, there will be times when the device refuses to cooperate (although it can be convinced to do so through an appropriate encounter skill check such as Interaction–*charm, intimidate,* or even *bribe*) or activate itself against the user or another target. The device has an Intelligence score of 3d4 and can communicate on an empathic or telepathic level with its user.

Slight: There is a 1-in-6 chance that the device is recalcitrant when the user tries to activate it. Whenever the user rolls a Critical Failure on a skill check, there is a 1-in-6 chance that the artifact activates itself against the user or another person within range.

The Treatment

Form: Procedure/Treatment
Purpose: Physical Enhancement, Transmutation
Powers: FX grafting (0); Hyper-adaptation (0); Molecular Transformation (0).
Drawbacks: Decreased Ability (0).

When brilliant biochemist Mikhail Selinkov stumbled upon a process to adapt humanoid life to exist in hostile environments, he was overjoyed. When he discovered that "The Treatment," as he later dubbed it, had the side effect of allowing the recipient to transform molecular compounds, he realized that he had just created the ultimate terraforming program.

Those undergoing "The Treatment" can exist comfortably in any environment that deviates up to two total grades from their natural environment on the GRAPH system. (See Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*.) Thus, a human being (accustomed to G2/R1/A2/P3/H2) could comfortably survive in a high-radiation (R3) environment, a very high-gravity (G4) environment, or an environment with both thin pressure (P2) and frigid temperature (H1).

In addition, such individuals can, once per day, activate the Brick–*invulnerability* Super Power FX skill at no FX energy cost, providing 10 minutes of protection against a single type of environmental hazard (such as heat/fire, cold, corrosion, poison, or radiation). While this power is active, the hero ignores any stun or wound damage caused by the hazard, and treats mortal damage from the hazard as stun damage.

Most spectacular of all, however, is the ability the hero gains to create and deconstruct molecular compounds from existing substances, as described in Chapter 12 of the *Gamemaster Guide*. The power operates once per day and affects up to 10 kg or 1,000 cubic meters of gas at a range of 10 meters.

Sadly, the effect has one minor drawback. Those undergoing "The Treatment" lose some willpower, suffering a –1 reduction to their Will score. Dr. Selinkov sees this as not worth fixing—after all, the less strong-willed your terraformers, the more likely they are to follow orders.

Moderate: As above, but there is a 1-in-4 chance that the device needs to be convinced to operate, and chance of self-activation is 2-in-6.

Extreme: As above, but the chance of self-activation is 3-in-6.

Possession

More dangerous than a device with the Blackouts drawback, the artifact has the ability to take over the mind and body of its user.

Triggers for the possession include times of stress, d6 hours after the artifact is activated, or anytime the user rolls a Critical Failure on a skill check.

When the possession attempt occurs, the device makes a possession skill roll (modified by the Will resistance modifier of the wielder). If it succeeds, the hero is possessed. The possessed hero can make a Resolve–*mental resolve* roll every hour to regain control of his or her body.

While the device has possessed the hero, it might seek to learn more about the world, act out a secret agenda determined by its creator, disrupt the life of its wielder, or even pretend to be the wielder to cause some mischief.

Slight: The device has a possession skill score of 12, and possession attempts occur only once every three or four adventures.

Moderate: The device has a possession skill score of 14, and possession attempts occur about once every one or two adventures. The target's *mental resolve* roll to regain control is made at a +1 penalty.

Extreme: The device has a possession skill score of 18, and attempts occur every adventure. The target's *mental resolve* roll to regain control is made at a +2 penalty.

Spirit Prison

The device is a prison for a powerful alien, spirit, or extradimensional being.

This creature resents its confinement and wishes to be released; using the powers of the artifact temporarily weaken the restraints that keep it in place and allow it a chance to break free. Each use of a power allows the entity to make a Resolve–*mental resolve* roll (at +2, +1, or +0 penalty for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing power used); success means the creature breaks free of the prison and goes on a rampage.

The device is powerless without the bound entity, and the only way to force it back into the device is for the user to succeed against the creature with contested *mental resolve* rolls. (The device can imprison only that creature or a similar type, and this is the only power that works while the entity is freed.) The entity can perform other actions at no penalty while resisting the call of its prison. Killing the entity means the device is nonfunctional until a similar sort of being can be forced into it.

Slight: The imprisoned creature is relatively weak, such as a minor animal spirit or an imp (least demon).

Moderate: The imprisoned creature is of moderate power: an average animal spirit, a guardian angel, or lesser demon.

Extreme: The imprisoned entity is very powerful, perhaps a great loa, warrior angel, or greater demon.

Sean Reynolds has always mixed magic and technology, with flying saucers in his AD&D® games and elves in his SF games. Andy Collins, however, is still upset about that whole "your chocolate in my peanut butter" thing and thinks Sean is just asking for trouble.

TRANSMISSIONS

By Andy Collins, JD Wiker, and Jeff "Zippy" Quick

Saturday January 16, 1937

He appeared again last night, just after midnight. I was fixing myself a late-night snack when I caught a flash of movement out of the corner of my eye. Turning, I saw him, muddy clothes, rifle, and all, as if he had just stepped out of the trenches and into my kitchen.

I almost did not drop my sandwich this time. Even when it is not the first time, one simply does not become accustomed to seeing one of the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers standing in one's kitchen. At least I had the presence of mind to offer him a wedge of Stilton, though I cannot say I expected him to accept. After all, he never speaks or shows any sign he understands my words.

Despite that, I almost feel I am beginning to know this young man, if that is truly the correct word to use when describing what for all the world seems to be nothing more than a spectre. He is definitely young. I cannot imagine him any older than eighteen at most, despite the tired look in his eyes. His gear marks him as a soldier in the Great War, and I have identified his battalion from markings on his jacket. His identity remains a mystery to me. However, there were simply too many young men like him who died at Beaumont Hamel and other hell-holes.

Still, I have to wonder how many more Sunday nights shall be marked with his appearance, as well as how long my sanity can last under such circumstances.

Gamemaster Hints

This journal page could serve a variety of purposes. Perhaps the ghost still haunts this house, and the heroes must investigate. Is the ghost a harbinger of danger, an angry spirit, or merely a restless specter denied a peaceful afterlife?

The journal page might be a hoax perpetrated to create a news story for a tabloid show. Alternatively, the heroes might need to contact the writer of the journal (or his next-of-kin) as part of a separate investigation into hauntings. The purpose selected by the Gamemaster determines the "how and why" that the journal page falls into the heroes' hands.

DARK•MATTER™

Winds measured at 145 kph drove through the Mount Illumination colony on Yellow Sky in the Tychus system two weeks ago. Dozens of deaths are reported, with more expected as workers clear devasted areas. Damage estimates are in the millions of Concord dollars.

Yellow Sky's corrosive atmosphere damaged several outlying buildings across the settlement, including several hydroponic farms. Although other Yellow Sky settlements have given assistance, Orlamu officials have appealed to the Galactic Concord and all nearby vessels for supplies, including food, water, clothing, and e-suits.

Mount Illumination has had a difficult existence in its 250-year history, continuing to be intensely self-reliant even after the Long Silence. Surviving colonists are reported to be dismayed but in good health.

Gamemaster Hints

The heroes' ship might be in the area to hear Mount Illumination's distress call, or they could be hired to deliver emergency supplies to the settlement. Mount Illumination researches alien archaeological sites on Yellow Sky. While storms aren't unheard of, they usually aren't this strong. Why was this one so severe?

- **Archaeologists accidentally activated a dormant weather machine belonging to the previous inhabitants.**
- **Pirates seeded the atmosphere with a storm cocktail designed to cover up their activities.**
- **Perhaps the locals are right and an angry god really is unhappy with the desecration of its sacred sites.**

Dungeoncraft

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By Ray Winninger

Over the past two months, we've discussed some general tips for effective adventure building. Now let's put those tips to work and generate a complete concept for a first adventure.

Creating the Concept

Every great adventure begins with a great concept. Before you pull out the graph paper or start thumbing through the *Monstrous Manual*™ book, take some time to stop and think about the adventure you're creating. Although other approaches can be equally effective, many of the most memorable AD&D® scenarios are location based.

This means that the heart of the adventure consists of a series of maps and a key that describes the important locations on them; the heroes' mission is to explore the maps and overcome the challenges they meet along the way. As a consequence, you should begin planning your adventures by thinking about exotic, interesting locales. Ideally, you're looking for an environment that is relatively self-contained and can accommodate plenty of rooms, chambers, and nooks capable of housing monsters, tricks, and traps. To keeps things fresh, you should expend some effort trying to dream up a location that is as different as possible from the dungeons your players have tackled in the past. An important part of devising a suitable adventure location is considering how and why that location was built, and how it came into its present state. Failing to answer these important questions is a mistake that derails an awful lot of first-timers. A random nondescript hole in the ground isn't nearly as interesting as the "long abandoned stronghold of Zelligar and Rogan that is said to have been deserted ever since a strange curse claimed the lives of all its inhabitants more than a hundred years ago."

On Location

Many of the best adventures start with a great setting, so make sure you start with an interesting location. Here are a few simple ideas:

- A long-abandoned dwarven mine
- An ancient sentry tower
- An orc stronghold located in a dark forest
- An evil temple built on an island in a marsh
- A gigantic hollow tree
- An old burial ground

Always keep in mind that the potential to uncover the secrets created by the DM is one of the major attractions of the AD&D game. Without a coherent rationale underpinning your dungeon, it's going to be awfully tough to create meaningful secrets. And while you're giving some thought to the history of the adventure locale, be sure that you don't make a related mistake that befuddles an equal number of beginners—make sure the players have an adequate opportunity to uncover and understand the background you create. Although the players needn't necessarily know that they are exploring the lost stronghold of Zelligar and Rogan when they first set foot in the dungeon, you should try to make sure that they'll uncover this secret by the time they leave. All too many novice DMs spend a lot of time creating elaborate backgrounds for their creations without giving the players a good chance to understand what is happening.

Of course, whenever the subject of background arises, you should be thinking about the First Rule: to create only those details that are absolutely necessary for play.

After you've thought up a couple of possible locations, but before you go any further, consider your goals for this first adventure. An adventure that is perfectly suited to begin a new campaign has four special requirements. Although it's not really necessary to build all four of these characteristics into your scenario, each of them you manage to include will make it easier for the players to become interested in your game.

Catch up on past installments of Dungeoncraft.
http://www.wizards.com/dragon/Welcome.asp

1 It Explains How the PCs Meet

The AD&D game gives players a tremendous amount of flexibility when creating their characters. Chances are good that your players will create characters drawn from a wide variety of races, classes, and alignments. An ideal first adventure provides your players with a ready rationale that explains how their characters meet and decide to adventure together.

Imagine, for instance, an adventure that opens with each of the player characters receiving a summons to visit a remote temple. Once they arrive, they all recognize the temple's high priest—over the years, in a variety of different guises, the priest provided some favor or service to each and every one of them in exchange for a promise one day to return his generosity. In fact, across the span of his career, the priest aided thousands of individuals under similar circumstances. The priest then reminds the adventurers of their promises to repay his kindness and explains that he needs them to join forces and track down an important relic that was recently stolen from his church by a gang of bandits.

Similarly, you might plan an adventure that begins when the PCs each show up at the local temple seeking the cure for a strange fever that has recently gripped a friend or loved one. The priest of the temple explains that the only cure is a draught sipped from a magic chalice stolen from the temple by goblin raiders a few years ago. This news should provoke the player characters to join forces in search of the goblins and the stolen chalice.

Of course, elaborate rationales such as these aren't strictly necessary. If you can't think of anything else, you can always begin your adventure with the old classic, "One evening, you're all sitting around the inn enjoying yourselves, when you overhear an old man telling a fantastic tale...." But the more you can do to make the player heroes' first meeting a more organic piece of your adventure, the easier it is to get the adventure off the ground and get the players interested.

2 It Provides a Portal for New PCs

Beginning AD&D characters are fragile. Just one or two mistakes is often all it takes to send a 1st-level character to the afterlife. As a consequence, it's entirely possible that one or two of the PCs will not survive your first few adventures. Over time, as the adventurers become more durable, character deaths should become increasingly less frequent as the party gains more power and more flexibility. To account for this phenomenon, you should try to design your first few adventures in a way that allows newly generated replacement PCs to be introduced into play as smoothly as possible. If you've selected an evil temple in the swamp as your locale, for instance, you might want to place a prison dungeon somewhere on the temple map. If one of the PCs dies, then it's not too hard to explain how the remaining adventurers suddenly stumble across his replacement in one of the temple's halls—the new character just escaped from the dungeon prison and is hoping to avenge himself on his captors!

One of your most important responsibilities as Dungeon Master is to keep the players interested in the campaign.

3 The Location is Reusable

Most of the earliest and most notable AD&D adventures were vast complexes that called upon the players to make many return visits to penetrate all their secrets. If you can get away with it, it's not a bad idea to mimic this approach when creating the adventure you'll use to kick off your campaign. The advantages are obvious—not only do you present your players with a wide variety of possibilities for exploration, you also save yourself a lot of effort. A well-designed environment of this type might fill several weeks of play (or more!), giving you plenty of time you can use to begin crafting your next challenge. Note that an adventuring environment doesn't have to be huge to be reusable. You might set your adventure in a relatively small iron mine overrun by orcs, for instance. After a few evenings' worth of adventure, the heroes finally manage to rout the orcs from the mine, earning the eternal gratitude of a band of dwarves who are the rightful owners of the mine. A couple weeks later, though, the orcs return to the mine in greater numbers and reclaim their prize, prompting the player heroes to clear out the complex once again and overcome an entirely new set of challenges the orcs have placed in their path. Later still, the players might uncover a secret explaining why the orcs were so intent on capturing the mine in the first place, encouraging them to return to the mine for a third time in search of a hidden chamber or two they overlooked during their first two visits.

This last example illustrates an important point. Always save the maps and notes that make up your adventures. You never know when you'll find an opportunity to pull out an old location and use it as the setting for an entirely new adventure.

4 It Foreshadows Bigger Events

Finally, an ideal first adventure should give the players a taste of bigger things to come. One of your most important responsibilities as Dungeon Master is to keep the players interested in the campaign. As noted in earlier columns, one of the easiest methods of maintaining interest is to construct interlocking "onion layers" of secrets that the players can peel back one by one. Ideally, your first adventure should introduce the players to these onion layers and hook them from the very beginning. If your campaign world partially revolves around an age-old conflict between a tribe of fire giants and a secret society of wizards, for example, you might try to foreshadow this conflict in your first adventure. Perhaps the adventure consists of exploring an abandoned wizard's tower. As they explore the tower, the player heroes discover that a powerful band of creatures obviously attacked and ransacked the tower, killing all the inhabitants and somehow smashing

through formidable defensive barriers. Particularly observant players might realize that the marauders made a systematic effort to destroy every book in the tower and that the marauders were obviously looking for something. Even after the adventure is complete, this set up gives the players a lot to think about. Who killed the tower's inhabitants? Why? What were they looking for? Why did they destroy the books? The fact that you incorporated these mysteries into the adventure suggests to the players that you'll eventually provide them with answers, probably piquing their interest.

It's important to realize that creating an AD&D adventure is not the same thing as writing or planning a story.

If you're having a hard time deciding what to foreshadow in your adventure or how to go about it, don't sweat it for now—just carry on with the design. Later, after you've fleshed out the adventure's basic parameters, randomly pull a card or two from your "deck of secrets" (you have been maintaining your deck, haven't you?) and take a crack at figuring out how you might link the secret you've drawn to your basic scenario. Don't be afraid to invent new details to make the secret fit; this is exactly how your campaign world will grow to take on a life of its own.

Creating the Situation

After selecting a suitable locale for your adventure and contemplating your goals, turn your attention to devising the basic situation. What sort of creatures live in the adventure area? What are they doing there? How did they get there? Do they hope to accomplish anything? How might the adventurers discover the adventure locale? What might the adventurers hope to accomplish?

The key word here is "situation." Many beginners (and even a few professionals) mistakenly devise a "plot" at this point instead of a situation. Plot implies that you know exactly what is going to happen once play begins. Situation, on the other hand, implies that you know enough of the details to figure out what will happen during play, after you see what the players decide to do. It's important to realize that creating an AD&D adventure is not the same thing as writing or planning a story. Instead, it's more akin to filling up a toy box with a collection of puzzle pieces you'll use to assemble stories later. In general, if you can't look back on what you're developing and imagine four or five different ways in which the adventure might unfold, you're probably concentrating too much on plot and not enough on situation. If you fail to achieve the proper balance, you'll find yourself pulling the players through the adventure rather than letting them tackle the scenario their own way.

Suppose that your adventure calls upon the PCs to recover a stolen magical potion from the stronghold of a local wizard. In this case, you shouldn't worry about how you expect the players to obtain the potion. Instead, concentrate on figuring out where the potion is kept within the stronghold and how it is guarded, why the wizard stole the potion, and what he plans to do with it. Armed with this information, you'll be prepared to deal with any approach the players might attempt. If they decide to sneak into the stronghold and pilfer the potion, you know what obstacles stand in their way. If they make an attempt to bargain with the wizard, you know exactly how important he considers the potion and can therefore decide what he might be willing to accept in trade. If the PCs take too long to fulfill their quest, you know exactly what the wizard plans to do with the potion and can easily decide what happens next. Perhaps after a week, the powerful noble who hired the wizard to steal the potion arrives to claim it, giving the players one last chance to obtain the draught before it is gone forever.

Putting the Pieces Together

The easiest way to illustrate good adventure-building technique is by example. These concepts should become a great deal clearer as we walk through the process of devising a specific adventure.

First, I thought about location and decided upon a ruined, underground temple. While a temple isn't terribly interesting, I was looking for something with a classic D&D® "dungeon" flavor. To spruce up the locale, I've decided that this particular temple sits at the bottom of a deep, barren ravine located in the Black Wood, a few days' travel southwest of Ironoak. This ravine, known to locals as "The Scar," is one of the few patches of land on the entire continent that is not blanketed beneath Aris's lush forests. No one knows exactly why the Scar is so desolate. All available evidence seems to indicate that the surrounding lands were once fertile, but they were somehow devastated by a mysterious natural catastrophe.

At this point, I turned my attention to crafting a situation that might fit the four criteria outlined above. Eventually, I hit upon an interesting idea: The temple is functioning as a makeshift prison camp under the control of an orc tribe that lives in the Black Wood. The orcs have overrun the temple ruins and are using their prisoners to dig through the rubble so they can retrieve some sort of item lost in the temple several hundred years ago. I've decided that the PCs begin the campaign as unarmed prisoners. Their obvious goal is to escape.

I like this concept for several reasons:

1. It explains how the player heroes met and decided to adventure together. With the adventurers all imprisoned together, they are well-motivated to get to know each other and cooperate.

2. It should be easy to introduce new PCs into play. Presumably, the PCs aren't the orcs' only prisoners. If one or more of the PCs dies, it should be relatively easy to introduce a new prisoner who can take his or her place.

3. Designed properly, the temple should be a highly reusable environment. I imagine a vast underground complex, many areas of which have been sealed off by fallen rubble and debris. As the campaign progresses, I can gradually give the adventurers access to the

capabilities needed to clear out more rubble, periodically opening up new areas of the complex and allowing the players to discover new secrets.

Furthermore, once the heroes manage to escape, there are many means that I can use to motivate them to return. While they are still imprisoned, for instance, the heroes might discover what the orcs are looking for. If the consequences of the orcs achieving this objective are sufficiently unpleasant, the heroes might be strongly tempted to return to the temple to foil the orcs, or to capture the prize for themselves. I might also introduce an NPC with a daughter imprisoned inside the temple. After the NPC discovers the players' escape, he might hire them to return to the temple to rescue his girl. Yet another possibility is to introduce various legends detailing items, spells, or knowledge said to be lost inside the temple, tempting the players to make even more return visits.

4. The "prison break" situation gives me a good opportunity to design an adventure that will adequately challenge both the players and their characters (the Fourth Rule of Dungeoncraft). Since the player heroes begin play unarmed and relatively defenseless, they'll have to use their wits as well as their character capabilities to succeed. I envision a *Great Escape* scenario, in which the players must make the most of the few items they manage to sneak out from under the noses of their orcish overseers. I might also ask the players to intelligently select their allies from among the other prisoners and overcome interesting physical obstacles. They might decide to dig secret tunnels, lead all the other prisoners in an uprising against the orcs, uncover some of the temple's secrets and use them to their advantage, or pursue any one of a number of other courses.

5. This setup lends itself to some interesting roleplaying possibilities. Not only can the PCs interact with their fellow prisoners and the orcs but each also will have an opportunity to figure out how he or she was captured before play began. This should encourage each player to invent a handful of interesting details about his or her character.

Selene's Treachery

To recap, way back in *Dragon® Magazine* issue #256, I decided that my campaign world, Aris, was actually a living entity worshiped as a goddess by her inhabitants. Hoping to produce an heir that might replace her in the natural cycle of the cosmos, Aris gave birth to a daughter, the moon Selene. Several thousand years ago, Selene broke away from the planet and was cast into the heavens in a process that Aris's clergy equate with childbirth. Unfortunately, Selene later proved to be a vengeful, destructive being, and she was disowned by Aris, who is now planning to birth a new moon. Selene has since secretly created her own race of followers (the mind flayers), who are building hidden citadels across her surface.

With all that out of the way, the only base I've yet to cover is to guarantee that this first adventure serves as an adequate introduction to my campaign and starts the players down the road to uncovering some of the interesting secrets I've prepared for them. To give me some ideas, I drew a card from my "Deck of Secrets" and came up with "Selene's Treachery." (See the sidebar if you need to refresh your memory about this secret.)

After some careful consideration, I created a backstory linking the ruined temple with the secret of Selene. (See the above sidebar.) First of all, I've decided that the Scar is actually the site where Selene was "born" several thousand years ago. Her separation from Aris is the terrible cataclysm that dug the ravine, shattered the temple, and killed the local vegetation. In fact, the temple itself served as a sort of "womb" in which the baby goddess was nurtured by Aris's high priests before she was born. I've decided that Aris originally planned to give birth to twin moons. For several generations, the priests of the temple watched over two large "eggs" (resembling enormous gems) and cared for them according to Aris's instructions. Just before the eggs "hatched," though, they were temporarily stolen by cultists from the Legion, the rival sect that worships Aris's dark and destructive side. The Legionnaires hoped to curse the eggs so the goddesses within them would be born as cruel and merciless beings who might help the Legion seize control of Aris herself. Eventually, one of the temple's most noble paladins rescued the eggs, but not before the Legionnaires successfully cursed one of them. Since Aris and her priests had no desire to birth a malevolent goddess, only the pure egg was returned to the womb; it's corrupted sister was locked in a deep dungeon to languish.

Curiously, just after the eggs were returned, the paladin awoke one night in the throes of a mysterious evil madness. Shortly thereafter, he secretly switched the positions of the two eggs, tricking the priests into birthing the cursed twin. This tale explains Selene's treachery.

I've decided that the orcs who are excavating the ruins of the temple at the base of the Scar are working under the direction of a mysterious stranger who is none other than the undead incarnation of the paladin who betrayed the temple priests several thousand years ago. Ever since his transgression, the paladin has been a dark servant of Selene and the Legion. To this day, he still doesn't understand what compelled him to forsake his duties. The paladin has returned to the temple ruins after all these years in search of the second egg. The mind flayers have recently discovered a spell that would allow Selene to absorb the essence of her unborn sister, greatly augmenting the moon goddess' power.

Of course, I don't intend to allow the players to uncover much of this story for many weeks to come. In this first adventure, they'll briefly encounter the mysterious paladin and uncover just enough of the story to whet their appetites. For now, I'll emphasize the orcs, their mysterious quest, and the idea of escape.

That wraps up another installment. Tune in again in thirty days, when we'll begin to design the temple and its inhabitants.

Ray Winninger is an author and a game designer of the old school. He is the egg man. He is the walrus. Goo-goo ga-joob.

Sage Advice

By Skip Williams

Need Some Help With Your Game?

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The Sage cannot make personal replies;
please include no SASE with your questions.

This month, the sage explores various magical details of the AD&D® game.

What, exactly, can a creature do while in gaseous form?

The creature can move by flying at a speed of 1 (class A maneuverability), and can see, hear, smell, and touch. The creature cannot talk, attack, cast spells, or use innate abilities—including psionic abilities. The creature can pass through small holes or narrow openings, even mere cracks.

What demihuman races are allowed to be elementalists?

The 2nd-level wizard spell *past life* from the *Tome of Magic* allows the caster to view the final minute of the subject's life from the subject's point of view. Suppose the subject was unconscious at the time of death. What would the spell reveal? Suppose the subject was delirious and hallucinating, or just dreaming at the time of death? What would the spell reveal? Also, our campaign uses the PLAYER'S OPTION®: *Combat & Tactics* rules. How much of the subject's life does the spell reveal if the subject died in combat?

The spell reveals the last minute (60 seconds) of the subject's life as the subject experienced it. If the subject were unconscious during that time, he or she would have experienced nothing, and the spell reveals nothing except that the subject was not conscious. I suppose a dream or hallucination could qualify as "experience" in this case, but the caster should be able to tell that the spell is revealing a dream or hallucination.

If you're using combat rounds from the PLAYER'S OPTION: *Combat & Tactics* book, the spell still reveals the last full minute of the subject's life, even when the subject has died in combat.

The description for the *invisibility* spell says all the recipient's items vanish along with the recipient, but it also says that if the recipient has a light source, it still emits light. Does this mean that the recipient still casts a shadow?

Invisible things do not cast shadows (or cast reflections). Light from an invisible source causes visible things to cast shadows.

One of the characters in our party, a specialty priest of Corellon Larethian, has undergone a magical alignment change and has become lawful good. Clerics of her faith can be lawful good, but specialty priests must be chaotic good. We are currently clueless about what happens to the character. Will she lose her status as priest and become a normal cleric of her faith, just as a paladin becomes a fighter? Or will she just have to cope with the loss of some spells until the alignment issue is settled?

Since the character has not really done anything to offend her deity, the character becomes a cleric with access to the full range of cleric spells and abilities. The character's ultimate fate is up to your DM; however, an *atonement* spell to reverse the alignment change, followed by a suitable quest (something pleasing to the deity), and perhaps another *atonement* spell at the quest's end, ought to restore the character to her old status as a specialty priest.

When a magedoom (a monster from the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® *Annual III*) hits a wizard and the wizard loses spell levels, must the wizard completely relearn the lost spells, or can the character just study them again?

The magedoom's special attack causes memorized spells to vanish from the wizard's mind as through they had been cast (though any material components are not consumed). Once the wizard has regained the lost spellcasting levels (one level per hour), normal study with spellbooks is all that is required to restore the lost spells.

The *Tome of Magic* seems vague on a few points regarding elementalists. What demihuman races are allowed to

be elementalists? What are the level limits for these races?

I recommend humans and half-elves (the same races that can become invokers or conjurers). Half-elf elementalists have an advancement limit of 12 (subject to the prime requisite bonuses from Table 8 in the *Dungeon Master® Guide*), just like any other half-elf wizard.

The general information on dragons in the *Monstrous Manual®* book says a dragon's spellcasting level is its age category plus its combat modifier. The entries for the individual dragon types, however, give a certain level and tell you to add on the combat modifier to determine spellcasting level. The only exception is the brown dragon; that entry says brown dragons cast spells as 8th-level wizards. Does this mean that brown dragons always cast spells as 8th-level wizards? How do you to figure out the spellcasting level of a dragon?

Use the information in the individual dragon entries. A brown dragon's spellcasting level is eight plus its combat modifier.

In the original AD&D game, the casting time for the *feather fall* spell was 1/10 of a segment, or about .6 seconds. Without getting too far into the math, this means that a wizard has to fall no more than 10 feet before getting the spell off (given that casting cannot begin until the wizard falls). The current rules give the casting time as 1, implying a casting time of 1 segment, or 6 seconds. Given that a wizard will typically fall over 500 feet in that time, it seems that the usefulness of the spell is now sorely limited. Though I am inclined to view the implications of this change as mere oversight, I know a physics teacher who disagrees and insists that *feather fall* should be useless at heights less than 600 feet (except as an attack against airborne creatures). The question is, therefore, how long should it take to cast the spell?

It takes one action to cast a *feather fall* spell. Exactly how long that action takes is hard to estimate, but it lies somewhere between the amount of time it would take to say "BOO!" and one minute. Since the spell description says the spell takes effect instantly, I imagine the actual time required is mush closer to the "Boo!" end of the spectrum.

In any case, the current game does not use segments, and you should not assume that a spell with a casting time of 1 takes 6 seconds to cast; even the 1-minute length of a melee round is an arbitrary value used strictly for convenience. Allowing a *feather fall* spell to slow any fall greater than 10 feet is exactly how you should play the spell.

Specialty priest of Berronar Truesilver (from the *Demihuman Deities* book) can cast spells from the sphere of Protection as if they were priests of four levels higher. Does this mean a 3rd-level priest who would normally be able to cast only 1st- and 2nd-level spells can cast a 4th-level spell from the sphere of Protection?

No. The power affects only a spell's level-dependent variables (if it has any). The casting level boost also makes the spell harder to dispel (see the *dispel magic* spell description.) It does not grant the character any extra spells.

A spellcaster could use a mirror to target a character behind her or around a corner, because that would fulfill the line-of-sight requirement, right?

No. There must be an unbroken line between the caster and the target, and a character can cast spells toward only his or her front or flanks.

How is the second function of the *wand of polymorphing* supposed to work? Can the recipient change forms?

The function works just like a *polymorph self* spell. The wand wielder chooses the subject's initial form, but the subject is free to change forms thereafter just as if he or she had cast *polymorph self.*

SONG AND DANCE NUMBERS

I'm trying to use the spellsinger mage kit from the *Wizards and Rogues of the Realms* book with the proficiency system from the *Player's Option: Spells & Magic* book. Since spellsingers must make Dancing proficiency checks to cast their spells, would a spellsinger with a Dexterity score of 17 have to roll a 17 or less for success or a 10 or less?

If you're using the *S&P* system, 10 is correct (base 6 for the Dancing proficiency, +4 for the 17 ability score), provided the character has not spent any character points to boost the base success number.

The spellsinger description says the Dancing proficiency penalty for casting a spell is –4 for the each level of the spell above the caster's level. For example, a 3rd-level spellsinger attempting to cast a 5th-level spell would suffer a –8 penalty to the proficiency check. Now, a typical 3rd-level wizard of would be able to cast two 1st-level spells and one 2nd-level spell, so that's still a pretty good chance to successfully cast a 5th-level spell. Would it be okay if I changed the description so that the failure chance was based on the difference between the highest level the character could cast as a normal wizard and the attempted spell's level? For example, a 5th-level spellsinger (normally capable of casting only 3rd-level spells) attempting to cast a 5th-level spell would suffer a –8 penalty to the proficiency check.

Your approach seems slightly more sensible to me.

A wizard with a 15 Intelligence has a maximum spell level of 7th. Would this also apply to a spellsinger with a 15 Intelligence? Or can a spellsinger with a 15 Intelligence really cast 9th-level spell with a successful Dancing proficiency check?

Spellsingers must abide by the spell level maximums for their Intelligence scores, as shown on Table 4 in the *Player's Handbook*. If you're using the *Skills & Powers* proficiency system, you might want to base a spellsinger's maximum spell level on the character's Charisma score.

BLESSED RELIEF

How long does a *bless* spell last of you cast it on a weapon? What good does the spell do when cast on a weapon? Does the spell enable one to hit creatures that are immune to nonmagical weapons? Would a magical weapon move up a plus if it receives a *bless* spell?

A *bless* spell lasts 6 rounds if cast on a weapon. A *blessed* crossbow bolt can kill a rakshasa. Certain extraplanar creatures are susceptible to *blessed* weapons. Otherwise, there is no official game effect. I recommend, however, that the wielder of a *blessed* weapon gain all the *bless* spell's benefits (+1 to attack rolls and saving throws against fear) for as long as the spell lasts. Since the spell was cast on the weapon, only the wielder gains the benefits from the spell. I also recommend that you allow *blessed* weapons to harm creatures that are harmed by +1 magical weapons. If the weapon that receives a *bless* spell already has a +1 or better enchantment, the wielder receives no additional combat bonuses but still receives the saving throw bonus.

Is a *bless* spell subject to magic resistance?

It depends. If a magic resistant creature receives a *bless* spell, it must check its magic resistance to see if the spell takes effect. The success or failure of the magic resistance roll does not affect any other recipient of the spell. Note that creatures can voluntarily lower their magic resistance. Once a subject has received a *bless* spell, however, he or she can freely battle creatures with magic resistance because the spell effects the recipient, not the recipient's foes.

Since *smoke powder* is a magical substance, can it harm monsters that can be harmed only by magical weapons?

Yes, *smoke powder* creates a blast of magical force.

The *Temple of Elemental Evil* adventure contains a spell named *push*. Can you tell us exactly what this spell does and what its statistics are?

Push is a defunct spell from a earlier version of the AD&D game. You should substitute *unseen servant* for *push* wherever it appears. You could also treat *push* like a *telekinesis* spell that lasts only 1 round and affects a maximum weight of 25 pounds.

Does a character's magical defense adjustment from Wisdom apply to a ghost's special attacks?

A character's magical defense adjustment applies to saving throws vs. a ghost's *fear* power. It also applies to a ghost's *magic jar* power. Note that when using the *magic jar* power, there is no need to total the subject's Intelligence and Wisdom scores and compare them to the ghost's total; just have the subject roll a saving throw vs. spell and adjust for Wisdom. If the saving throw succeeds, the *magic jar* attempt fails.

Is the saving throw against a *hold person* or *hold monster* spell a paralyzation saving throw or a spell saving throw?

The subject of any *hold* spell (*hold person, hold monster, hold animal, hold undead*) makes a saving throw vs. spell, adjusted for Wisdom. If a *hold* effect really was a paralyzation effect, then a paralyzation saving throw would be in order. (See the Sage's discussion of saving throw priorities in last month's column.) A *hold* spell's effect is similar to paralysis but in a class of its own.

Does a spellcaster know how long his spell will last?

The character knows the parameters of the spell; that is, the character knows the same things about the spell that the *Player's Handbook* tells the player, which includes the spell's duration.

It's up to the DM to decide how well the character can keep track of time passing after the spell is cast. Some DMs I know assume that all spellcasters have an innate time sense and they take care to warn players when spells are about to run out. Most DMs leave it up to the player to keep track of time as it passes in the game. I recommend the latter approach. Some players I know equip their characters with hourglasses and other timekeepers so they can keep track of spell durations better.

What spells can affect the results of a draw from the *deck of many things*? Specifically, can a *remove curse* spell reverse the effects of a Balance card?

Very few spells can reverse effects from a *deck of many things*. In most cases, it takes a *wish* to undo a card's bad effects, and some cards, such as the Void, are *wish*-proof.

A *remove curse* spell cannot reverse the alignment change caused by the Balance card. An *atonement* spell might. (The DM could decide that the character was due for an alignment change anyway.) A *freedom* spell (the reverse of *imprisonment*) frees a character trapped by the Donjon card, provided that the spell is cast at the locale where the victim is imprisoned.

If a character lights a *candle of invocation* and gains priest levels, is the character automatically able to memorize spells of higher level and cast them? What happens if the character puts out the *candle* and lights it again?

The *candle* does grant extra spells, but the character must stop and pray for them while the candle burns. (Each spell requires 10 minutes per spell level.) If the *candle* goes out, the character loses the extra spells. If the character lights the *candle* again during the same day, the character must pray for the extra spells again.

Whenever the character lights a *candle of invocation*, any spells he or she has previously cast that day count against her new limit. For example, a 6th-level cleric with a Wisdom score of 18 can cast five 1st-level, five 2nd-level, and three 3rd-level spells each day. The character memorizes a full load of spells and goes on an adventure, during which she casts two 1st-level spells and one 3rd-level spell.

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DMDA98

When the going gets tough, the cleric lights her *candle of invocation* and temporarily becomes 8th level. Her new daily spell total is now five 1st-level, five 2nd-level, four 3rd-level, and three 4th-level. It takes the character 1 hour and 50 minutes to memorize the one 3rd-level and two 4th-level spells she has gained, and the *candle* must be burning the whole time. The cleric now has three 1st-level, five 2nd-level, four 3rd-level, and two 4th-level spells memorized. (The *candle* does not replace the 1st-level spells the cleric has already cast.) If the cleric casts her two 4th-level spells immediately and then puts out the *candle*, she loses the extra 3rd-level spell the candle has granted her. If the character lights the *candle* again that day, she can gain only one 3rd-level spell (she's already used her 4th-level spells), and she must spend 30 minutes memorizing before she can cast it.

***Gauntlets of dexterity* give a nonthief a 45% chance to Pick Pockets and a 37% chance to Open Locks. If the character has a high Dexterity score, does he or she enjoy Dexterity bonuses to the Pick Pockets and Open Locks? What happens if a bard dons the *gloves*?**

If a character gains the Pick Pockets and Open Locks ability from a pair of *gauntlets of dexterity*, the character gains no Dexterity bonuses to those thief skills. Bards who don the gauntlets gain +10% to their Pick Pockets scores, just as thieves do, and gain Open Locks at 37%, with no Dexterity bonuses applicable.

Will drow items degrade if brought to the surface world inside a *bag of holding*?

Will drow items degrade if brought to the surface world inside a bag of holding?

Yes. The items degrade at the normal rate. A closed *bag of holding* does keep sunlight off the items, however.

Lots of wizards in novels seem to have personalized versions of their favorite spells, such as *magic missiles* that glow red and make whistling sounds as they streak toward the target. Does a wizard have to research a new version of the spell to make minor changes of this type?

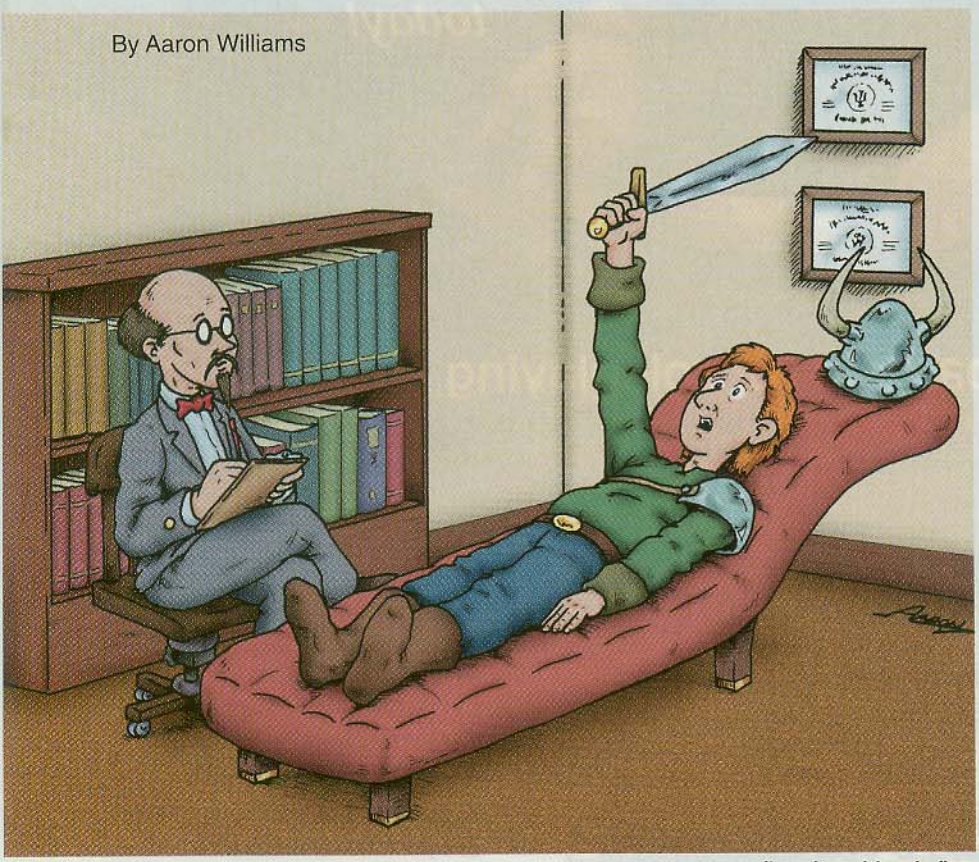
It's fine to assume that minor effects that don't change the game function of a spell, such as the color and shape of *magic missile*, vary with the caster. If you assume that *magic missile* makes a sound, the sound could also vary with the caster. It's best to assume that the wizard sets these parameters when first learning the spell. Once the wizard has set those parameters, however, he or she must research a new version of the spell to change them.

My players and I have had a discussion on whether weapons are evil. I consider weapons to be evil or good only if they are special weapons with unique powers; normal weapons are indeed normal in every way. My players are sticking to the argument that a weapon has an alignment depending on how it is used.

Objects have no alignments at all. Magical weapons, however, can be intelligent, and such items usually have alignments. That does not mean that your players are completely off their rockers, however. Lots of DMs I know rule that certain deeds can leave behind auras that taint objects or places. A nonmagical weapon used in brutal murder, for example, might carry a faint aura of evil about for awhile, and a *detect evil* spell might reveal such an aura. The weapon itself still would not have an alignment; evil would simply be sticking to it like a stain.

Skip Williams muses that objects sometimes sure seem to have alignments. Skip says certain fairly old automobiles and very new computers he has encountered have exhibited very prominent chaotic streaks, and sometimes just a little bit of evil.

By Aaron Williams



"I feel that I'm a seventeenth-level fighter trapped in a first-level body."

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The Devil's Disciples

By Johnny L. Wilson

AD&D® Monsters from *Disciples: Sacred Lands.*

Maybe it was the irony of a former Southern Baptist minister assisting the Legions of the Damned in their quest to free the fallen archangel within the game's special history, but I had a marvelous experience playing the campaign game for the fallen ones in *Disciples: Sacred Lands*. The turn-based game of fantasy and strategy features four campaigns of a few episodes each where each population (Empire, Undead Hordes, Legion of the Damned, or Mountain Clans) has an epic quest to undertake. Each episode features a key landmark to conquer, and that conquest opens up another segment of the story until the quest is completed. You can read my full review of the game in *TopDeck™ Magazine* issue #3 or merely take the word of my computer gamer shorthand that *Disciples: Sacred Lands* is a hybrid with elements of *Heroes of Might & Magic*, *Lords of Magic*, and *Master of Magic*.

The quests for each clan are simple, but effective. The fallen angels want to restore a paradise destroyed by jealousy. The Undead Hordes want the blood of the Mountain Clans to avenge wrongs perpetrated against the goddess Mortis. The Mountain Clans, warriors with a thin Nordic veneer, desire to restore the knowledge found in lost runes. The Empire wants to restore peace and tranquillity by removing all traces of the Undead Hordes and Legion of the Damned. But for my playing time, the artwork, special effects, and wicked joy of winning can best be found when commanding the fallen ones.

FOR WHOM THE BELIARH TOLLS

It requires a *monster summoning VII* to conjure this infernal beast. In the computer game, it is always a good idea to summon the monster near the objective so that it can engage the defenders of the objective in two separate melees.

Two summoned creatures in the Legion of the Damned campaign caught my interest—the beliarh and the infernal avenger. Both are powerful summoned creatures and both are extremely useful for those hard probes designed to simultaneously scout and attrit the enemy. Once you've found out the relative strength of your opponents and whittled them down to size, you can always come in with the "A" team of your adventuring party. In this article, I try to convert the two summoned beings into monsters that would make sense in an AD&D® campaign.

GORE-GAN-TUAN

This giant beast from the Pit gets extra points for goring its foes with its horns.

Beliarh

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Volcanic, subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	None
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivore (man-eater)
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15–16)
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1–4
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	6
HIT DICE:	8+4
THAC0:	10
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8+6/1d6+6/1d4+3/1d4+3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to fire and poison
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	8' tall
MORALE:	Champion (15–16)
XP VALUE:	3,000

Beliarh

The beliarh are fiendish creatures with fiery coloration and bovine looks. Belial, ruler of the fourth layer of Hell, created the beliarh to roam across the planes in search of prey.

Combat: A beliarh is extremely strong, possessing a Strength of 18/00. At close range it butts for 1d8+6 points of damage, claws for 1d6+6 points of damage, and gores its prey for 1d4+3 points of damage per horn. If the beliarh is 30 feet or more from its opponent and has a direct line of sight, it can also charge any opponent of Size M or larger, gaining a +2 bonus to its attack rolls and inflicting double damage with its head butt (2d8 points) and horns (2d4 points each). However, it loses its single claw attack. The beliarh do not carry weapons and cannot use magical items.

Beliarh are immune to fire and poison. They suffer half damage from cold-based attacks (or none, if the saving throw is successful). They can be struck by normal weapons.

Habitat/Society: The beliarh are known as "the sons of Belial" and are fairly recent creations. The beliarh are often sent by Belial (or Lady Fierana, Belial's daughter) to wreak havoc against their foes on the Prime Material Plane. Sometimes, however, they are summoned by high-level casters to fight battles (see **Ecology**). On the Prime, a beliarh is most comfortable in areas of high volcanic activity or in labyrinthine passages deep beneath the surface. Beliarh can understand any human language and communicate via telepathy.

Ecology: Beliarh are often summoned to fight for the Legion of the Damned. If the desired combat is unsuccessful, the beliarh is usually destroyed. If the combat is successful, the beliarh can remain on the Prime Material Plane for 24 hours before being exiled once more to Phlegethos. Because of their infernal origin, no portion of a beliarh's corpse remains on the Prime Material Plane after 24 hours.

IRE IN THE BEAST
Infernal Avengers are conjured creatures (*monster summoning VII*) who are summoned to avenge the Legion of the Damned.

Infernal Avenger

Infernal avengers are fallen ones who glory in the carnage of battle. They are denizens of Hell who derive a sense of pleasure from avenging wrongdoings done to the Legion and are particularly pleased when incinerating the champions of the Empire and the Mountain Clans.

Infernal Avenger	
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	None
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	None
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15–16)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	9 (d10)
THAC0:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d12+3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	20d6 *fireball*
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to fire
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	75%
SIZE:	6½' tall
MORALE:	Champion (15–16)
XP VALUE:	4,000

Combat: Infernal avengers are armed with *flame tongue longswords* +3 that cause 2d12+3 points of damage. In addition to the powerful *swords*, infernal avengers can cast one 20d6 *fireball* per summoning. Infernal avengers believe that they are in the right, so they will stand firm in battle and will not retreat no matter what the odds. Once dispatched to the nether regions, they can be summoned to fight again. Further, infernal avengers cannot be turned by priests and paladins, but they are returned to their home plane by *holy word* spells. A *dispel evil* spell cast upon an infernal avenger inflicts 5d10 points of damage to the creature.

AVENGERS DISSEMBLE!
Infernal Avengers attack with a fiery sword and they simply won't retreat, even in the face of insurmountable odds.

On the Prime Material Plane, infernal avengers wear smothering cloaks and hoods to keep their skin from bursting into flame from oxygen contact. To look at the shrouded face of an infernal avenger is an eerie experience. Adventurers who stand against one must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or flee from its horrifying visage.

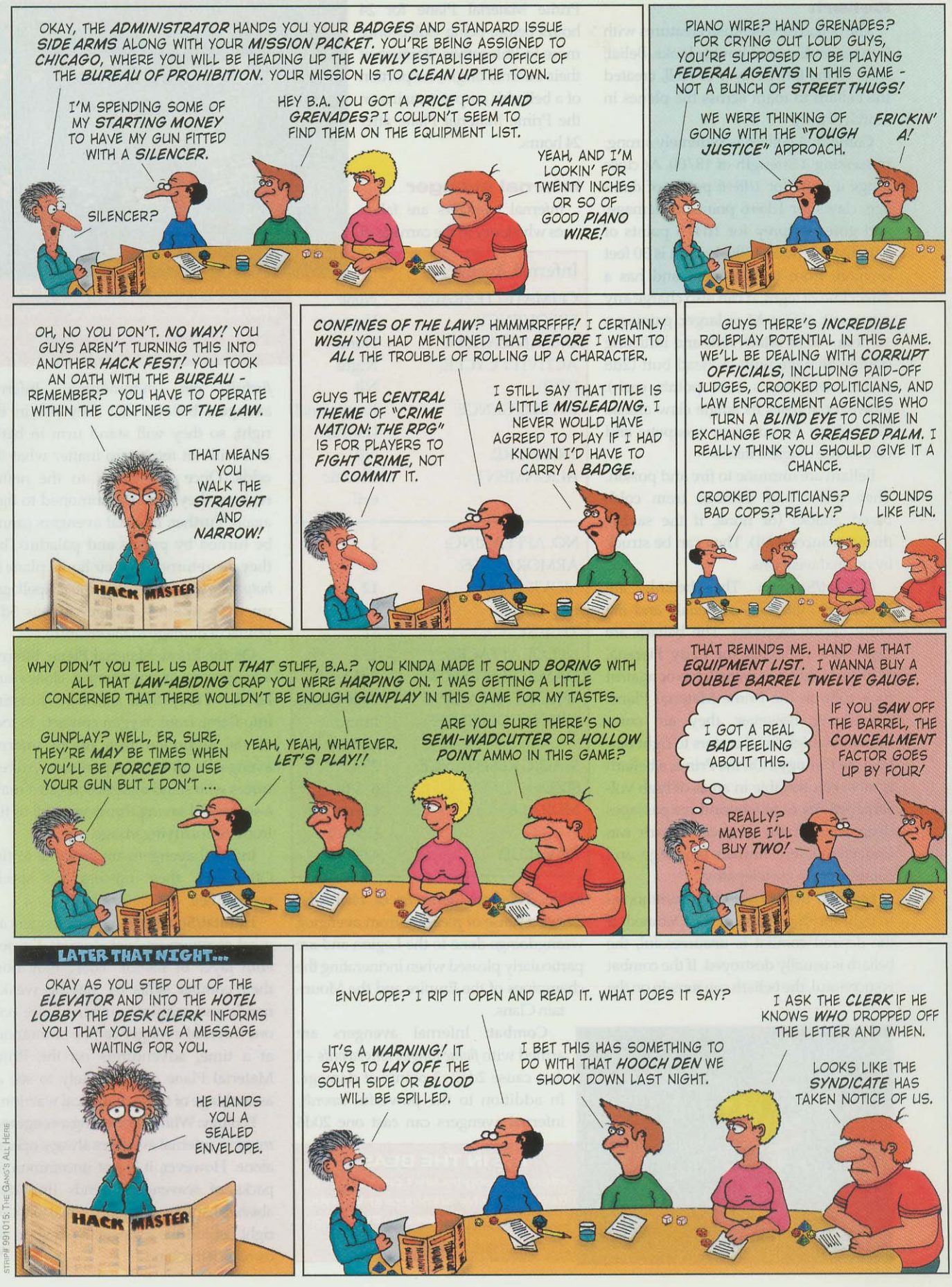
Infernal avengers are immune to fire. Otherwise, they possess no special immunities.

Habitat/Society: Infernal avengers are most common on Maladomini, the seventh layer of Baator. There they hone their combat skills by slaying weaker fiends and captured sinners. Since only one infernal avenger can be summoned at a time, adventurers on the Prime Material Plane are not likely to see an assemblage of these diabolical warriors.

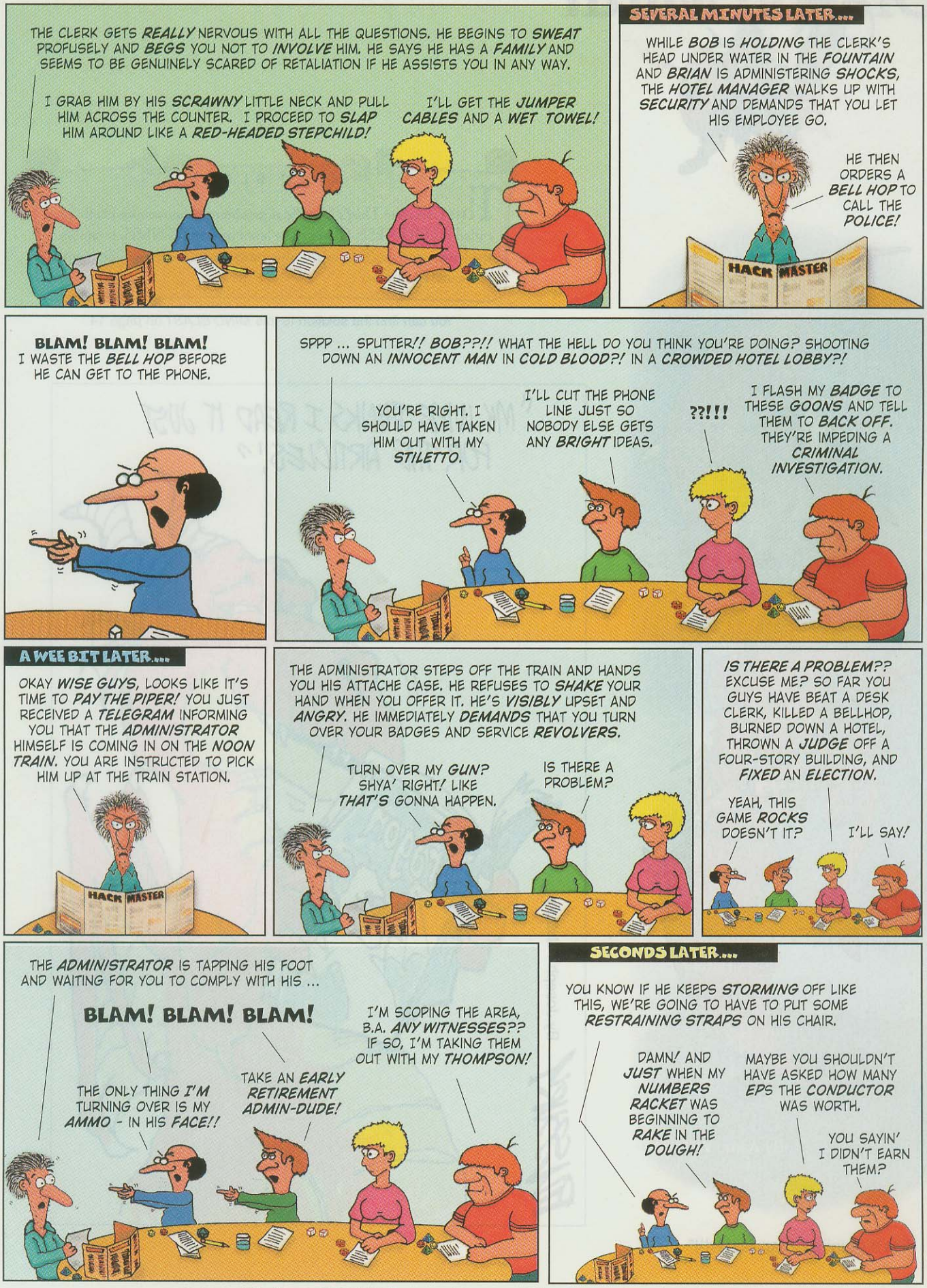
Ecology: When performing a vengeance mission, infernal avengers always operate alone. However, it is not uncommon for packs of scavenging fiends (including abishai, lemures, and spinagons) to follow right behind the avenger, feeding on the carnage left behind.

Knights of the Dinner Table

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN


OKAY, THE ADMINISTRATOR HANDS YOU YOUR BADGES AND STANDARD ISSUE SIDE ARMS ALONG WITH YOUR MISSION PACKET. YOU'RE BEING ASSIGNED TO CHICAGO, WHERE YOU WILL BE HEADING UP THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED OFFICE OF THE BUREAU OF PROHIBITION. YOUR MISSION IS TO CLEAN UP THE TOWN.
I'M SPENDING SOME OF MY STARTING MONEY TO HAVE MY GUN FITTED WITH A SILENCER.
SILENCER?
HEY B.A. YOU GOT A PRICE FOR HAND GRENADES? I COULDN'T SEEM TO FIND THEM ON THE EQUIPMENT LIST.
YEAH, AND I'M LOOKIN' FOR TWENTY INCHES OR SO OF GOOD PIANO WIRE!
PIANO WIRE? HAND GRENADES? FOR CRYING OUT LOUD GUYS, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE PLAYING FEDERAL AGENTS IN THIS GAME - NOT A BUNCH OF STREET THUGS!
WE WERE THINKING OF GOING WITH THE "TOUGH JUSTICE" APPROACH.
FRICKIN' A!
OH, NO YOU DON'T. NO WAY! YOU GUYS AREN'T TURNING THIS INTO ANOTHER HACK FEST! YOU TOOK AN OATH WITH THE BUREAU - REMEMBER? YOU HAVE TO OPERATE WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE LAW.
THAT MEANS YOU WALK THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW!
HACK MASTER
CONFINES OF THE LAW? HMMMRRFFFF! I CERTAINLY WISH YOU HAD MENTIONED THAT BEFORE I WENT TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF ROLLING UP A CHARACTER.
GUYS THE CENTRAL THEME OF "CRIME NATION: THE RPG" IS FOR PLAYERS TO FIGHT CRIME, NOT COMMIT IT.
I STILL SAY THAT TITLE IS A LITTLE MISLEADING. I NEVER WOULD HAVE AGREED TO PLAY IF I HAD KNOWN I'D HAVE TO CARRY A BADGE.
GUYS THERE'S INCREDIBLE ROLEPLAY POTENTIAL IN THIS GAME. WE'LL BE DEALING WITH CORRUPT OFFICIALS, INCLUDING PAID-OFF JUDGES, CROOKED POLITICIANS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WHO TURN A BLIND EYE TO CRIME IN EXCHANGE FOR A GREASED PALM. I REALLY THINK YOU SHOULD GIVE IT A CHANCE.
CROOKED POLITICIANS? BAD COPS? REALLY?
SOUNDS LIKE FUN.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT STUFF, B.A.? YOU KINDA MADE IT SOUND BORING WITH ALL THAT LAW-ABIDING CRAP YOU WERE HARPING ON. I WAS GETTING A LITTLE CONCERNED THAT THERE WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH GUNPLAY IN THIS GAME FOR MY TASTES.
GUNPLAY? WELL, ER, SURE, THEY'RE MAY BE TIMES WHEN YOU'LL BE FORCED TO USE YOUR GUN BUT I DON'T ...
YEAH, YEAH, WHATEVER. LET'S PLAY!!
ARE YOU SURE THERE'S NO SEMI-WADCUTTER OR HOLLOW POINT AMMO IN THIS GAME?
THAT REMINDS ME. HAND ME THAT EQUIPMENT LIST. I WANNA BUY A DOUBLE BARREL TWELVE GAUGE.
I GOT A REAL BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.
IF YOU SAW OFF THE BARREL, THE CONCEALMENT FACTOR GOES UP BY FOUR!
REALLY? MAYBE I'LL BUY TWO!
LATER THAT NIGHT...
OKAY AS YOU STEP OUT OF THE ELEVATOR AND INTO THE HOTEL LOBBY THE DESK CLERK INFORMS YOU THAT YOU HAVE A MESSAGE WAITING FOR YOU.
HE HANDS YOU A SEALED ENVELOPE.
HACK MASTER
ENVELOPE? I RIP IT OPEN AND READ IT. WHAT DOES IT SAY?
IT'S A WARNING! IT SAYS TO LAY OFF THE SOUTH SIDE OR BLOOD WILL BE SPILLED.
I BET THIS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT HOOCH DEN WE SHOOK DOWN LAST NIGHT.
I ASK THE CLERK IF HE KNOWS WHO DROPPED OFF THE LETTER AND WHEN.
LOOKS LIKE THE SYNDICATE HAS TAKEN NOTICE OF US.

STRIP# 991015. THE GANG'S ALL HERE


THE CLERK GETS REALLY NERVOUS WITH ALL THE QUESTIONS. HE BEGINS TO SWEAT PROFUSELY AND BEGS YOU NOT TO INVOLVE HIM. HE SAYS HE HAS A FAMILY AND SEEMS TO BE GENUINELY SCARED OF RETALIATION IF HE ASSISTS YOU IN ANY WAY.
I GRAB HIM BY HIS SCRAWNY LITTLE NECK AND PULL HIM ACROSS THE COUNTER. I PROCEED TO SLAP HIM AROUND LIKE A RED-HEADED STEPCHILD!
I'LL GET THE JUMPER CABLES AND A WET TOWEL!
SEVERAL MINUTES LATER....
WHILE BOB IS HOLDING THE CLERK'S HEAD UNDER WATER IN THE FOUNTAIN AND BRIAN IS ADMINISTERING SHOCKS, THE HOTEL MANAGER WALKS UP WITH SECURITY AND DEMANDS THAT YOU LET HIS EMPLOYEE GO.
HE THEN ORDERS A BELL HOP TO CALL THE POLICE!
HACK MASTER
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
I WASTE THE BELL HOP BEFORE HE CAN GET TO THE PHONE.
SPPP ... SPUTTER!! BOB??!! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING? SHOOTING DOWN AN INNOCENT MAN IN COLD BLOOD?! IN A CROWDED HOTEL LOBBY?!
YOU'RE RIGHT. I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN HIM OUT WITH MY STILETTO.
I'LL CUT THE PHONE LINE JUST SO NOBODY ELSE GETS ANY BRIGHT IDEAS.
??!!!
I FLASH MY BADGE TO THESE GOONS AND TELL THEM TO BACK OFF. THEY'RE IMPEDING A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION.
A WEE BIT LATER....
OKAY WISE GUYS, LOOKS LIKE IT'S TIME TO PAY THE PIPER! YOU JUST RECEIVED A TELEGRAM INFORMING YOU THAT THE ADMINISTRATOR HIMSELF IS COMING IN ON THE NOON TRAIN. YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO PICK HIM UP AT THE TRAIN STATION.
HACK MASTER
THE ADMINISTRATOR STEPS OFF THE TRAIN AND HANDS YOU HIS ATTACHE CASE. HE REFUSES TO SHAKE YOUR HAND WHEN YOU OFFER IT. HE'S VISIBLY UPSET AND ANGRY. HE IMMEDIATELY DEMANDS THAT YOU TURN OVER YOUR BADGES AND SERVICE REVOLVERS.
TURN OVER MY GUN? SHYA' RIGHT! LIKE THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN.
IS THERE A PROBLEM?
IS THERE A PROBLEM?? EXCUSE ME? SO FAR YOU GUYS HAVE BEAT A DESK CLERK, KILLED A BELLHOP, BURNED DOWN A HOTEL, THROWN A JUDGE OFF A FOUR-STORY BUILDING, AND FIXED AN ELECTION.
YEAH, THIS GAME ROCKS DOESN'T IT?
I'LL SAY!
THE ADMINISTRATOR IS TAPPING HIS FOOT AND WAITING FOR YOU TO COMPLY WITH HIS ...
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
THE ONLY THING I'M TURNING OVER IS MY AMMO - IN HIS FACE!!
TAKE AN EARLY RETIREMENT ADMIN-DUDE!
I'M SCOPING THE AREA, B.A. ANY WITNESSES?? IF SO, I'M TAKING THEM OUT WITH MY THOMPSON!
SECONDS LATER....
YOU KNOW IF HE KEEPS STORMING OFF LIKE THIS, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO PUT SOME RESTRAINING STRAPS ON HIS CHAIR.
DAMN! AND JUST WHEN MY NUMBERS RACKET WAS BEGINNING TO RAKE IN THE DOUGH!
MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED HOW MANY EPS THE CONDUCTOR WAS WORTH.
YOU SAYIN' I DIDN'T EARN THEM?

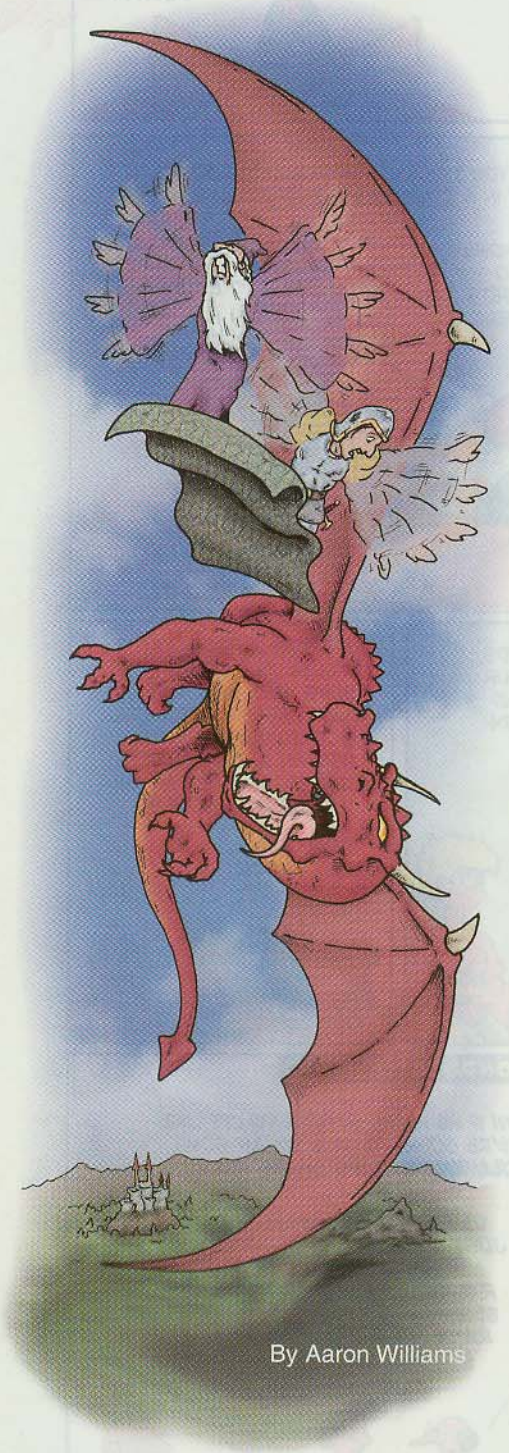
Knights of the Dinner Table™ © Kenzer and Company 2000 • Reproduced here under license.

Dragon Mirth™

MIND BLAST

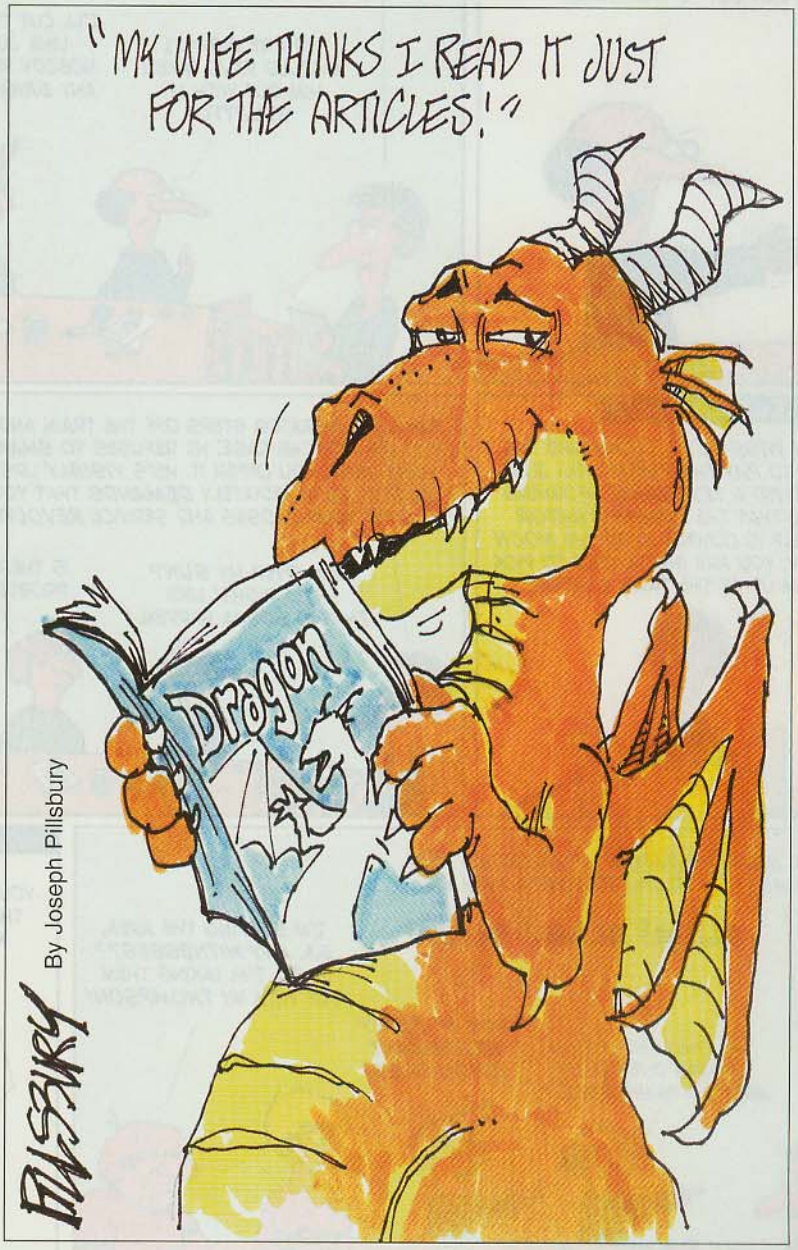
The *Complete Thief's Handbook* provides the nonweapon proficiency called ALERTNESS. Change one letter in ALERTNESS, scramble the letters, and you'll get what other nonweapon proficiency frequently possessed by thieves?

You can find the solution to this *MIND BLAST* on page 14



By Aaron Williams

"He's gaining! Flap faster!!!"



By Joseph Pillsbury

SHOP-Keep
by JOHN KOVALIC
FRANK, YOU'RE DEAD.
LORY, YOU'RE DEAD.
SCOTT, YOU'RE DEAD. NEXT TURN
PEGASAURUS GAMES OPEN
HI, BILL. UH... WHAT'S GOING ON?
THAT? THAT'S JUST THE IN-STORE GAMING GROUP.
RANDY, YOU'RE DEAD.
TERRY, YOU'RE DEAD.
NEXT TURN.
AS PART OF ITS SILVER ANNIVERSARY, TSR RE-RELEASED SOME OF ITS CLASSIC DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS ADVENTURES. IT'S GIVEN GAMERS EVERYWHERE A CHANCE TO RE-EXPERIENCE THEM!
JIM, YOU'RE DEAD.
KARL, YOU'RE DEAD
KATZ, YOU'RE DEAD.
NEXT TURN.
SO TO JOIN IN THE CELEBRATION, THE GROUP IS WORKING ITS WAY THROUGH SOME OF THE MOST HALLOWED ADVENTURES IN GAMING HISTORY!
BOTH BILLS ARE DEAD.
PAUL, LIZ AND CARSON ARE DEAD.
SCOTT'S DEAD. AGAIN. NEXT TURN.
WOW.

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DAVE, YOU'RE DEAD.
LARRY, YOU'RE DEAD.
AARON, YOU'RE DEAD.
AND SO'S YOUR DOG.
TODAY, OF COURSE, IT'S "THE TOMB OF HORRORS."
OK. EVERYBODY ROLL UP ANOTHER CHARACTER. DONE? GOOD. THEY'RE DEAD, TOO...
KOVALIC

Coming Attractions

February

Secrets of the Magister

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•Ed Greenwood•

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By R.A. Salvatore

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Editor's Choice

"Dark•Matter™ game fans should not be without this book! The sections detailing Arcane Magic FX and Faith FX complement the rules presented in the Dark•Matter Campaign Setting. One of my favorite FX powers in *Beyond Science* is called *gibbering larvae*, which allows an alienist to summon one or more 'sluglike alien creatures' with sharp jaws and a power called the *eyes of the dark ones*. Absolutely horrifying!"

•Chris Perkins•

Beyond Sciece: Guide to FX

An Alternity® Accessory
By Sean Reynolds

This book provides a fresh new look at the rules for FX or paranormal abilities such as magic and super powers. Compatible with any Alternity game, *Beyond Science* features over 100 new Arcane Magic, Faith, and Super Power FX skills in eighteen specialties, including alchemy, druidism, necromancy, energy control, and many more!

$18.95/$27.95 CAN
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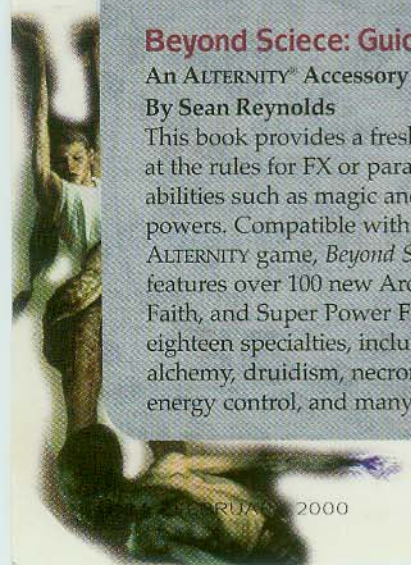
ISBN 0-7869-1619-2

From the Designer

"I liked working on this book because I enjoy mixing magic and technology in my games. Beyond science has over 100 spells (and 14 different kinds of spell-casters) and over 30 different super powers. This really expands what you can do with the game and allows you to run even more types of campaigns than you could with the core Alternity rules. Also, for those who want to convert their AD&D campaign over to the Alternity game, this is the book that saves you most of the work."

•Sean Reynolds•



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An AD&D® ACCESSORY
Edited by Jon Pickens

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Dragon
267
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The Truth Behind Urban Legends

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Animal Companions

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Familiars are only the beginning. For rangers, druids, wizards, and any animal-friendly hero, here are over a dozen "wild henchmen."

Herbcraft

By Owen K.C. Stephens

One proficiency covers a lot of territory, but exactly what does it do?

Beneath the Bough

By Miranda Horner

The male counterparts to the dryads of Ansalon are the wild, hedonistic satyrs. Includes rules for both SAGA® and AD&D® players.

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Fiction by J. Robert King

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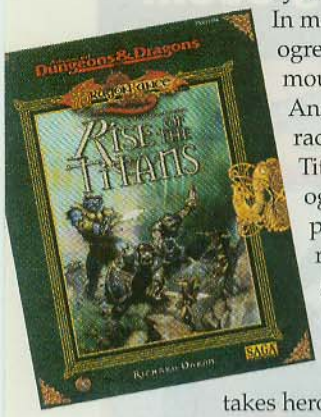
Rise of the Titans

An DRAGONLANCE Adventure
By Richard Dakan



In many ages past, ogres ruled the mountains of Ansalon. Now a new race, called the Titans, moves its ogre troops into position to recapture a former, glorious empire. *Rise of the Titans* contains an adventure that takes heroes deep into the newly militant ogre realms, where they must rescue kidnapped elves from the hands of a cruel ogre titan sorcerer. Additionally, this book details ogre culture and geography, provides new hero roles, and fleshes out various ogre items and artifacts.

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An DARK•MATTER Accessory
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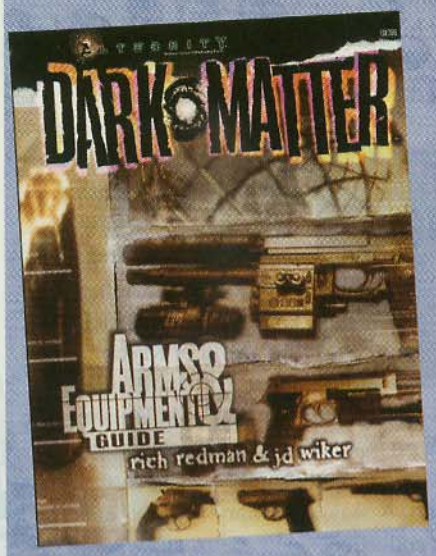

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Charlie Campbell, the Hoffman Institute's chief armorer and procurement expert, has seen it all. In this *Arms & Equipment Guide*, he'll run the new agent through a little bit of everything, explaining what works and what doesn't. Based on real-world, modern-day technology, the *Arms & Equipment Guide* provides dozens of new guns and hundreds of gadgets, tools, and useful devices that are usable in any modern-day espionage, ghost-hunting, or investigation campaign.

"The book is written from the perspective of the Institute's chief outfitter, Charlie Campbell. Charlie—who's based on a real gun enthusiast I used to know—has some very firm opinions of the equipment he assigns, the equipment he won't assign, and the people who ask for either kind."
•JD Wiker•

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This is a reissue of the three volumes that launched one of the greatest epic fantasy worlds of all time. Now, 15 years after their original publication, readers can again enjoy these classic works, featuring new cover art by noted fantasy artist Daniel Horne.

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Upcoming Product Guide

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WHAT'S NEW WITH PHIL AND DIXIE

By Phil Foglio

THIS MONTH WE'RE TALKING ABOUT 'UNEARTHED ARCANA' WHICH SIMPLY MEANS 'DISCOVERED TREASURES. I'LL DEMONSTRATE THE THREE BASIC TYPES; 'GOOD', 'BAD', AND 'NEUTRAL' - BY GOING THROUGH THE DESK OF DRAGON MAGAZINE EDITOR DAVE GROSS.
WHAT?! NO!!
It was a dark and stormy night. An elf screamed.
'NEUTRAL' ITEMS ARE ONES THAT EXIST ONLY TO ADD ATMOSPHERE OR TO HELP DEFINE OTHER CHARACTERS, SUCH AS THIS MAGAZINE...
'NAKED MINIATURES MONTHLY?
GIMMEE THAT!
ZOW!
SUBSCRIPTION
©(R) Foglio C-99
um... THEN THERE ARE 'BAD' ITEMS, SUCH AS TRAPS, OR CURSED ITEMS, SUCH AS -
- SIGH -
GROWF?
OH.
YOU.
!
HOW'D THAT GET IN MY DESK?! AND WHY IS IT BAD? IT'S KIND OF -
DON'T TOUCH IT!
TUG!
SQUEEE!
WHOOPS!
FOOM!
AIEEE!!
GREAT GANDALF - THE PAIN!!
- AND FINALLY THERE ARE 'GOOD' ITEMS, SUCH AS... AS A FIRST AID KIT?
- BANDAGES?!
- WAND OF HEALING?!!
- BACTINE?!
- ANYTHING?!
man - don't you ever CLEAN this thing out?!
'GOOD ITEMS ACT AS A REWARD, A WAY TO SAY "WELL PLAYED", A WAY TO REDRESS KARMIC IMBALANCES, A -
WHOA!
IT'S... IT'S...
MY FACE... WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY FACE?!
IT'S A PENGUIN GENERATOR! WOW! I'VE WANTED ONE OF THESE FOR YEARS! CAN I KEEP IT?!
GIVE... GIVE ME A MIRROR...
DEAL! HERE!
PING!
BUT REMEMBER - DON'T ALWAYS GIVE YOUR PLAYERS WHAT THEY WANT - A LITTLE FRUSTATION KEEPS THEM SHARP.
AARRGGHH!! KILL ME! KILL MEEEE
NEXT MONTH - OMENS FROM THE GODS IN DAVE'S MEDICINE CABINET!
CHUG! CHUG! CHUG!
SPA.
FON.
END.

Windows®95/98 & Windows®NT version

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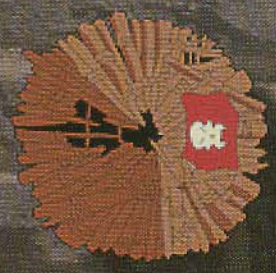

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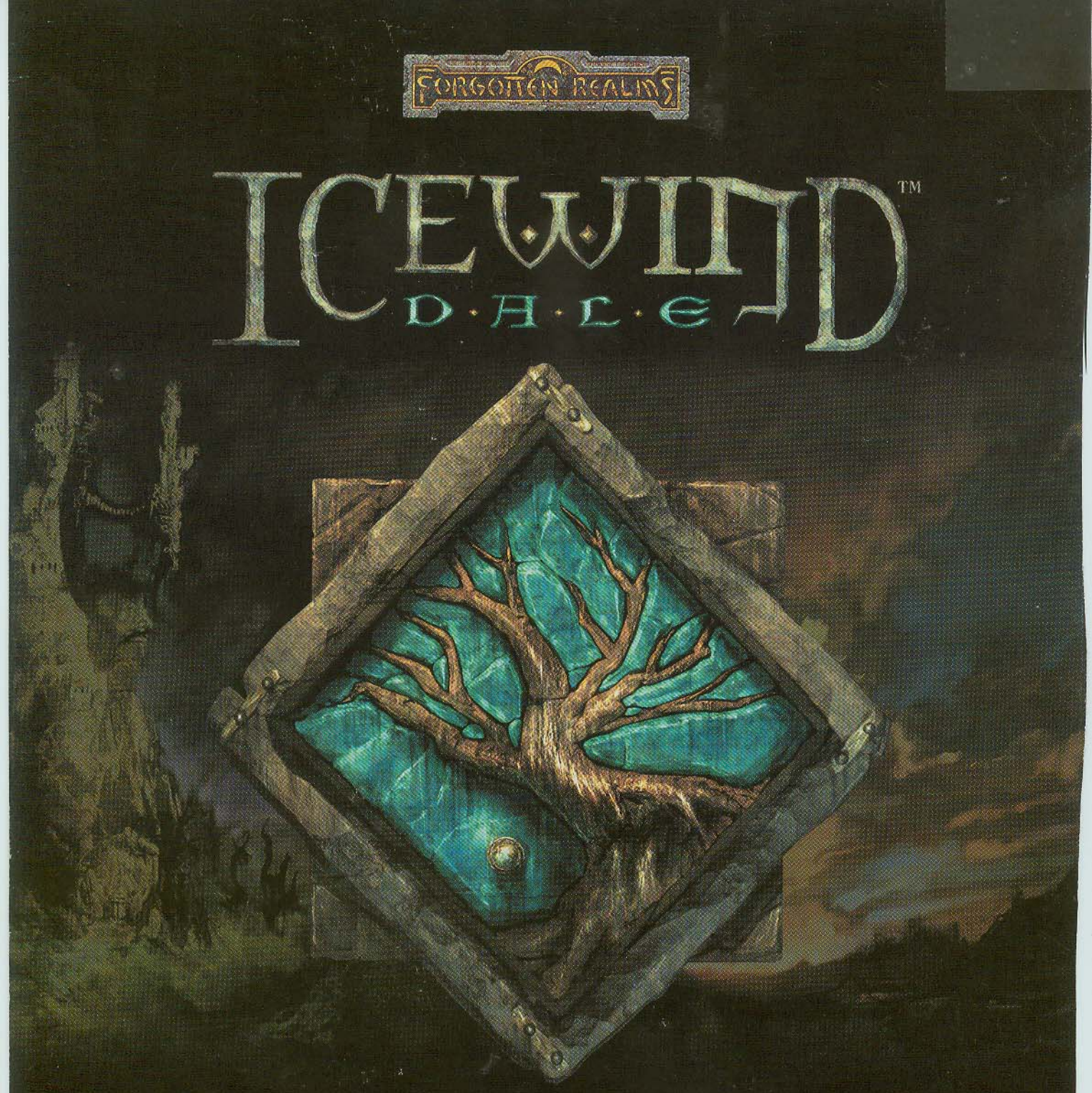

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